Nāgārjuna and the Philosophy of Openness

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Dedication

Dedicated to the people
who taught me about Buddhism

Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
Srī S. N. Göenka
Professor Ninian Smart
Professor Gerald J. Larson
Professor William Powell
Mrs. Nandinī Iyer
Professor Andrew Rawlinson

Contents

Abbreviations

Aṣṭa	*Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*
Laṅka	*Saddharma Laṅkāvatāra Sūtram*
MK	*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*
Rgs	*Ratnaguṇasaṃucayagāthā*
V	*Vigrahavyavartinī*

Foreword

In this penetrating contribution to thought about Nāgārjuna, Nancy McCagney points out that she espouses neither a Wittgensteinian nor an empiricist nor a Kantian interpretation of his work. I happened to know T. R. V. Murti, the best known Kantian exponent of the Madhyamaka, very well during my months in Benares in 1960; and I was close to K. N. Jayatilleke, the most gifted Pāli philosopher since Buddhaghosa, who introduced a stretched empiricist version of Buddhism. Though he was not an interpreter of any note of Nāgārjuna, he did take a Wittgensteinian view of the undetermined questions (at that time consonant with a position which I had expressed). These thinkers were both engaged in what essentially Professor McCagney is doing in this book: cross-cultural philosophy, and more particularly cross-cultural philosophy of religion. I think Murti, who disliked having foreign and homegrown untouchables studying works flowing from a sacred revelation (he was a Brahmin, of course), thought that his version of Madhyamaka was a "poor man's Advaita." So his interpretation would be useful in the wider world beyond the sacred Ganga. Jayatilleke, on the other hand, in his theory of the undetermined questions made a step in the direction of Nāgārjuna. By the way, I called his empiricism "stretched" because he included paranormal experiences and phenomena in his account of empirical data which most, though not all, contemporary empiricists were loath to do.

Nancy McCagney could be said to lie between Jayatilleke and Murti, and that is a refreshing place to be. A highly important aspect of her treatment of Madhyamaka is her noticing the vital analogy with space. In calling attention to the way Nāgārjuna uses space to illustrate what he means by *śūnyatā*, she notes the more positive side of emptiness which is often lost in this translation. It is true that

Christian scholars often like the term because it chimes in with the notion of self-emptying applied to Christ in his human interface. Although such a translation encourages dialogue, Nancy McCagney more adventurously and no doubt controversially uses "openness," and hence we get the subtitle of her book. This usage succeeds in alerting the reader continuously to the shift of emphasis wrought by her taking seriously the space analogy. Note that here we are not to load the concept of space with some of its most recent associations ,which are subsequent to the phenomenon of space travel.

One attraction of McCagney's treatment is the rediscovery of Mahāyāna links with the Theravāda. For instance, there is the concept of *upāyakosallam,* the skill in means of the Buddha in adapting his teachings to the condition of hearers, which played such a spectacular role in the development of Greater Vehicle religion. Incidentally the theory of history deployed by Buddhism, which stressed regress rather than progress since the time of the Buddha, encouraged the adaptation of the teachings and practice.

McCagney's book will, I believe, be an important stimulus to further reconsideration of Nāgārjuna. He is probably the single most interesting and important thinker in the Buddhist tradition. Moreover, McCagney's reappraisal sets the scene for further development of cross-cultural philosophy. The present work is deeply scholarly and technical, but its message should have a wider appeal. At present there is still insufficient engagement among Western philosophers in cross-cultural debates. If a wider, world canon were set, Nāgārjuna, together with Chu Hsi, Śankara, and Nishida (for instance) would be included. The last indeed is a notable exponent of crosscultural philosophy and also is addressed by McCagney's space-laden interpretation. In brief, this book is a prolegomenon to further extensions of a more global philosophizing.

Nancy McCagney notes, by the way, that global scholarship helps to modify particularist cultural biases in scholarship. She makes extensive use of the work of (for instance) Conze (a German), Johannson (a Swede), Lindtner (a Dane), LaMotte (a Frenchman), Stcherbatsky (a Russian), Jayatilleke (a Sri Lankan), Pandeya (an Indian), Johnson (an American), Warder (a Briton), Nakamura (a Japanese), and many others. Already scholarship is truly international; but reflection about thinkers is as yet much less so. Only a few philosophers of South and East Asia have begun to attract genuinely

international attention. Of classical philosophers, Nāgārjuna is the ripest for reflective reconsideration. This book provides a fine basis in scholarship for that next step. I trust that it will be an excellent stimulus in the field.

R. Ninian Smart
Santa Barbara
1997

Note

This study follows the convention of Franklin Edgerton, ***Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary***, vol. II (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi India, 1953) on the spelling of the "Madhyamaka" School of Buddhism, the proponents of which are "Mādhyamikas."

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Nancy McCagney
Santa Barbara
1997

Introduction

The following chapters offer neither a Kantian nor a positivist nor a Wittgensteinian interpretation of Nāgārjuna but an interpretation related to modern conceptions of Buddhism and supported by close historical and contextual scrutiny. This study takes into account the entire corpus of works that can be authentically ascribed to Nāgārjuna, and thus differs from more broadly and more narrowly based interpretations. The *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, translated into modern but not technical Western philosophical language, is appended.

Two questions have directed the course of this study. First, to what extent are the writings of Nāgārjuna orthodox? That is, is Nāgārjuna's analysis consistent with the canons and commentaries of the early schools, and particularly with the Theravāda or Pāli Canon version of the teachings of Gautama? Second, to what extent are the works of Nāgārjuna consistent with the early Mahāyāna texts, especially the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, but also the *Laṅkāvatāra* and other *sūtras*. The study finds Nāgārjuna's analysis of the philosophical foundations of the Middle Way consistent, with two important exceptions, with the Pāli Canon recension of the *Buddha Dharma* and with two Theravāda commentaries, but against the canons and commentaries of other early schools while drawing on them for methods and distinctions. But in the final analysis, orthodoxy becomes a moot question.

The important exception to "orthodoxy" is Nāgārjuna's use of the term "*śūnyatā*." Whereas the term "*suññatā*" in the Pāli Canon is well translated by the term "emptiness," Nāgārjuna's usage is inspired by the imagery of the sky or space (*ākāśa*) in early *prajñāpāramitā* literature, particularly the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*. The *Aṣṭa* conception of *ākāśa* is distinct from ancient and modern Western conceptions and refers not to a void or vacuum, but to something like the medieval Western conception of space as an ether. But unlike the Western conception,

ākāśa in the *Aṣṭa* is a luminous ether, filled with light. Conze observed that Buddhists derived "*ākāśa*" from "*kāś*," to shine, but the term is not, in contrast to Conze, parallel to its use by Henry Moore who was influenced by Jewish mysticism and described God as "the space of the world."[1] The symbols in early *Prajñāpāramitā* texts show that the Mahāyāna notion of *ākāśa* derives from meditation (*dhyāna*) on the sky, which is experienced as vast, luminous and without boundaries. This use is consistent with early Buddhist *dhyānas* on the *arūpadhātus* (formless realms) as well as the close connection drawn between *ākāśa* and *nirvāṇa* as *asaṃskṛta* (unconditioned) events (*dharmas*) by six of the early schools.

For Nāgārjuna, all events, and most importantly, *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, are not distinct because they are all like the sky, like space (*ākāśa*), without limits or boundaries which separate and distinguish them. Whereas *ākāśa* is said to exist in the *Aṣṭa* as a kind of ether, for Nāgārjuna space does not exist and space does not "not" exist. All events, including *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, are like space. Nāgārjuna has adopted this sense of *ākāśa* as the vast, luminous and open sky (which does not exist and does not "not" exist) in his use of *śūnyatā*, appropriately translated here as "openness."[2]

Nāgārjuna's new use of *śūnyatā* as the openness or limitlessness of events (*dharmas*) is the basis of his second important exception to orthodoxy, namely his argument that there is no distinction between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, already discussed above. This argument signals a clear departure from the Theravāda and other early school canons, but is an inevitable implication of Nāgārjuna's analysis of what must be true in order for the Eightfold Path to be true and efficacious. There would be no end of suffering (*duḥkha*) if it was permanent and unchanging, if it had an inherent or eternal nature (*svabhāva*). Names or words, including the terms in the Eightfold Path, designate or fix and make permanent what is impermanent and changing and so are limited, having only conventional truth. The higher truth is that because events change, because *saṃsāra* changes (with practice) into *nirvāṇa*, the terms, though useful, distinguish two states which are, in the final analysis, indistinguishable. The truth and usefulness of Gautama's Eightfold Path and his teachings on *pratītya samutpāda* (interdependent origination) depend on the nonpermanency of events, whereas the names or designations that describe such events appear to fix them and make them seem permanent and unchanging. The

Theravāda commentaries offered Nāgārjuna a justification for departing from the reported teachings of the Master, which enabled him to elucidate the necessary philosophical foundations for the truth of the *Buddha Dharma*.

This study examines the imagery of *ākāśa* in Mahāyāna and Madhyamaka Buddhism. The study concludes that the image of space is the root metaphor for Nāgārjuna's conception of *śūnyatā*, but that space is a fundamentally contradictory notion. Does space exist as that which does not exist? The contradictions apparent in attempts to describe space in the same vocabulary used to describe matter or events (*dharmas*) generate what at best can be considered paradoxes. Nāgārjuna's description of reality (*tattva*), based on the metaphor of space, results in what this study calls the "*śūnyatāvāda* paradox": It is the nature of events to not have a nature and therefore the nature of events is no-nature (*niḥsvabhāva*). The paradoxical result of negating *svabhāva* (inherent nature) is the implied assertion of *svabhāva*. Although the implication is denied by Nāgārjuna, the later split between Mādhyamikas and Yogācārins was partly due to the consistency between new Mahāyāna texts, such as the *Laṅkāvatāra*, and the acceptance or rejection of Nāgārjuna's denial of *svabhāva*. Later Kantian interpretations of Madhyamaka by Stcherbatsky and T. R. V. Murti, which rejected Nāgārjuna's denial of holding a view and posited an unprovable noumenon behind phenomena, are viable on the basis of the *śūnyatāvāda* paradox.

However, the study argues that nonabsolutistic interpretations of Nāgārjuna are better than Kantian interpretations because they make sense of a larger number of terms and arguments in Nāgārjuna's writings and are more consistent with the Pāli Buddhist tradition. The cross-cultural, global nature of scholarship on Madhyamaka has corrected and balanced the cultural biases of some earlier readings and happily, the result is that some progress has been made in understanding Nāgārjuna.

Notes

1. Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1962, cites Moore as identifying space with the omnipresence of God, the divine essence or essential presence that is "one, simple, immobile, eternal, perfect, independent, existing by itself, subsisting through itself, incorruptible, necessary, immense, uncreated, uncircumscribed, incomprehensible, omnipresent, incorporeal, permeating and embracing all things, essential being, actual being, pure actuality," 166.

2. Roger J. Corless, *The Vision of Buddhism*, New York, Paragon House, 1989 (read after this manuscript was completed), argues for the importance of space as a metaphor in Buddhism and translates *śūnyatā* as "transparency," 20. Corless cites Lama Anagarita Govinda, *Creative Meditation and Multi-Dimensional Consciousness*, Wheaton, Ill., Theosophical Publishing House, 1976, 51 (which he read after completing his own book) for using the same translation: "If *śūnyatā* hints at the nonsubstantiality of the world and of the interrelationship of all beings and things, then there can be no better word to describe its meaning than *transparency*. This word avoids the pitfalls of a pure negation and replaces the concepts of substance, resistance, impenetrability, limitation and materiality with something that can be experienced and is closely related to the concepts of space and light," in Corless, 27.

Chapter One: Early Buddhist Background

Nāgārjuna is most appropriately understood in the philosophical context of his time, conventionally dated from 150 to 250 C.E.[1] Depending on the dates accepted for the life of Gautama the Buddha,[2] Nāgārjuna lived seven to nine hundred years after the *parinirvāṇa* and was associated with the Madhyamaka school and the reign of King Candanapāla of Aparāntaka, perhaps Kaniṣka II in 119 C.E.[3] It was a time favorable to Buddhism when the Greco-Roman influenced Gandhāra school of art flourished, inspired Mahāyāna *sūtra*s were composed in Sanskrit and philosophical debate had become sophisticated.[4]

The Tibetan historian Bu-ston (1290-1364) records that Nāgārjuna was a monk at Nālandā near Magadha and a student of Rāhulabhadra, one of the founders of Madhyamaka and a student of Avitarka, a teacher of Mahāyāna, but the Chinese Mādhyamika Chi-tsang (549-623 C.E.) says Rāhulabhadra was Nāgārjuna's student.[5] Whether Nāgārjuna's lineage was Mahāyāna has been raised as a matter of debate in contemporary scholarship. No mention is made of Mahāyāna themes in texts that can with definitive certainty be ascribed to him. He does, however, refer to Early Buddhist texts, especially the *Nidāna*, *Kātyāyanāvavāda*, *Acelakāśyapa* and *Anavarāgra Sūtra*s in the *Saṃyukta Āgama* (Pāli, *Nikāya*) and also the *Brahmajala Sūtra* and the *Dhātavibhaṅga Sūtra* in the *Madhyama Āgama* (*Nikāya*).[6]

Nāgārjuna is also associated with the Mahāyāna by region and legend. Like the *Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtras*, he is said to have come from the south and to have been a frequenter of the *nāga loka* (dragon world under the earth) from whence the Perfection of Wisdom texts are said to have emerged. Place names such as Nāgārjunikōṇḍa lend credence to

his southern origins. Bu-ston says he came from Mahārāṣṭra in the south.[7] Conze dates the earliest of the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* (*The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*), as certainly before the Chinese translation in 179 C.E. and suggests the earliest verses may go back to 100 B.C.E.[8] The *Aṣṭa* says it will first be spread in the south. Nāgārjuna is even accredited with the *Śatasāharikā* (*The Perfection of Wisdom in One Hundred Thousand Lines*), which he is purported to have brought up from the *nāga* world.[9]

If all the texts ascribed to Nāgārjuna are by the same writer, he would have lived for more than 150 years and composed 122 texts. There may be more than one author by that name or perhaps texts written by others, possibly his students, were ascribed to their teacher to lend them authority. Robinson suggests we define Nāgārjuna as the author of the *Mūlamādhyamakakārikā*.[10] Other texts of similar content and style can then be ascribed to him with some measure of confidence, namely, the *Vigrahavyāvartinī*, the *Śūnyatāsaptati*, the *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, the *Vaidalyasūtra* and the *Prakaraṇa*.[11] These works express similar views, are respectful to early Buddhist *sutta*s and make no mention of the Mahāyāna.

Having made this choice, other works said to be by Nāgārjuna become questionable. The *Suhṛllekha* advocates following the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara and the *buddha* Amitābha, distinctly Mahāyāna themes.[12] Thus attributing the *Suhṛllekha* to Nāgārjuna begs the question as to his being a Mahāyānist. The *Ratnāvalī* is an even more explicitly Mahāyāna text, defending the school against those who would deride it:

> Due to the great extent and depth
> Of the Mahāyāna, it is derided
> Through ignorance by the untrained and lazy,
> Who are the foes of themselves and others.[13]

Warder finds the Madhyamaka term "*paramārthastava*" in the *Catuḥstava* and the *Niraupamyastava* refers to the Mahāyāna. He thinks it is quite likely that these works are in fact by Nāgārjuna, but cautions that this has not been "established beyond doubt" and "ought not to be assumed."[14] Nevertheless, Warder has further reasons to suppose that some questionable texts might be authentic. Tāranātha (1574-1608) recounts that towards the end of his life, Nāgārjuna

returned not to Mahārāṣṭra, but to the Āndhra domain in the south of the emperor Sātavāhana, said to be Nāgārjuna's student and to whom the *Suhṛllekha* and the *Ratnāvalī* are said to be addressed. Nāgārjuna's association with Sātavāhana is attested in numerous Indian literary works, such as the novel *Līlavaī*, the Jain work *Purātanaprabandha-saṃgraha*, the *Rasaratnākara* and various alchemical works, etc. Warder thinks the particular Sātavāhana, identified in secular literature as the connoisseur and patron "Hala," is Puḷumāyī II (Vasiṣṭhīputra) who is recorded on an archeological inscription to have improved the stūpa at Amarāvatī.[15] Lamotte argues that Nāgārjuna wrote the *Suhṛllekha* to Yajñaśrī rather than Puḷumāyī, the other Āndhran dynasty king cited in the inscription on the balustrade, and mentions the inscription '*Bhadanta Nāgārjunāchāryya*' on a stūpa at Jaggayyapeṭa.[16] The Venerable Jetsun Rendawa Shonno Lodo (1349-1412), a Sakya scholar, says the letter is addressed to the king of Āndhra, Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi, son of queen Bala Śrī.[17]

This evidence suggests that Nāgārjuna was probably the author of the *Suhṛllekha* and *Ratnāvalī* and was therefore a Mahāyānist. However, David Kalupahana insists that he is not.[18] His argument rests not on an examination of the questionable texts, but on a lucid presentation of the affinity of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* to the original teachings of the Buddha, especially the *Kaccāyanagotta Sutta* (Discourse to Kaccāyana). In my view, it is correct as well as helpful to point to the nonoriginality of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* and to Nāgārjuna's reaffirmation of Gautama's Middle Way.

The question Kalupahana begs is whether the Mahāyāna is not also in line with the words of the Master. Buddhist sectarian differences are profound and have at times been bitter, but the line between the early schools and the Mahāyāna may not be so cleanly cut, especially if the Mahāyāna arose from the Mahāsaṃghika school whose *Vinaya* (Rules of Discipline for monks and nuns) accords more closely with that of the descendents (Theravāda, Pāli for Elders) of the earliest school, the Sthaviravāda (Sanskrit for Elders), than to any other recension. This indicates for Warder that the *sūtras* (doctrinal texts) of the two earliest schools would also agree more closely with each other than they would with any of the later schools.[19] The *sūtras* of the Mahāsaṃghikas have not yet been discovered and the rise of the Mahāyāna awaits further study.

One way to resolve the issue is to suggest that Nāgārjuna was neither a Hīnayānist nor a Mahāyānist, but was midway between the two. Warder suggests he may have been trying to reunite the eighteen or more Buddhist schools that had branched off from the original teachings (*Dharma*).[20] Although he did not succeed in his own time, the rapproachment among them in present-day diaspora Buddhism maybe due in part to the continuity between early and Mahāyāna Buddhism found in Nāgārjuna's writings.

We are, however, still left with the status of the questionable texts. Nāgārjuna has been viewed as a Mahāyānist by most scholars.[21] By narrowing the field to the six indubitable works, the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, *Vigrahavyavartinī*, *Śūnyatāsaptati*, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, *Vaidalyasūtra*, and *Prakaraṇa*, we must recognize that the Nāgārjuna then studied is not the Nāgārjuna revered in Mahāyāna Buddhism who is credited with a wider range of texts, including devotional hymns.[22]

The most recent and meticulous work on the authenticity of texts was done by Christian Lindtner of the University of Copenhagen.[23] Happily he has resolved a number of perplexing questions and is able to credit some of the previously dubitable texts, including the *Suhṛllekha* and *Ratnāvalī*, to Nāgārjuna, thus restoring him, if not to his former mythical grandure, at least to the Mahāyāna. Lindtner's Nāgārjuna is no mere dialectician, but a living figure, an orthodox Buddhist monk concerned with ethics as well as doctrine. Lindtner has analyzed the texts ascribed to Nāgārjuna and assigned them to one of three classes: correctly attributed, wrongly attributed, and those which may or may not be genuine. Attending closely to the commentaries, three internal criteria were applied: does the work in question agree in a) style, b) scope, and c) doctrine with the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, unanimously regarded by scholars as well as Indian, Tibetan, and Chinese traditions as his *magnum opus*.[24] On the external criteria, Lindtner recognizes as genuine those works that meet the above tests and are furthermore explicitly ascribed to Nāgārjuna by trustworthy witnesses, namely Bhavya (Bhāvaviveka), Candrakīrti, Śāntarakṣita, and Kamalaśīla.

On these grounds, Lindtner found twelve texts that fall into the first category, correctly attributed: *Vigrahavyāvartinī*, *Śūnyatāsaptati*, *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa*, *Vyavahārasiddhi*, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, *Catuḥstava*, *Ratnāvalī*, *Pratītyasamutpādahṛdayakārikā*, *Sūtrasamuccaya*, *Bodhicittavivaraṇa*, *Suhṛllekha*, and *Bodhisaṃbhāra*.[25] This study agrees

with Lindtner's ascriptions with the exception of the *Bodhicittavivaraṇa*.

Lindtner confesses to not understand why the strange question of Nāgārjuna's Mahāyāna lineage was raised in the first place since the term "*gandharvanagara*" (the heavenly city of *gandharvas*), which occurs in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Chapters VII.34, XVII.33, and XXIII.8), "does not occur in the ancient *āgamas*." Further, "*MK* XIII, 8 is inspired by *Kāśyapaparivarta* . . . and *MK* XXIV, 8 by *Akṣayamatinirdeśa*" and so concludes "that even in the *MK* alone, the Mahāyāna background is indisputable."[26]

Nāgārjuna was a Mahāyānist who fully accepted the early *suttas* as well as defended his school against "the lazy." His *prayojana* (stated aim) was to reaffirm the *mādhyama pratipadā* (middle way) originally propounded by Gautama the Buddha. His argument was against the *Abhidharma*, canonical commentaries about the *Dharma* (doctrine) expounded by the Buddha in the *sūtras* (discourses) and composed, beginning in 350 B.C.E., by monk/scholars of different schools.

The *Abhidharma* was either based on or summarized by the *Matṛka*, an early list of seven topics covered by Gautama and, along with the *Dharma* and the *Vinaya* (discipline), comprised the *Tripiṭaka* (Buddhist canon in Three Baskets). The canon was transmitted orally for three hundred years before being committed to writing.[27] During this time, the *Saṅgha* (community of monks, nuns, and lay supporters) and the elaborations of the *Matṛka* (*Abhidharma*) became more and more distinct, as well as inconsistent with the original *Dharma*. Although the original *Saṅgha* continued undivided for at least a century after the *parinirvāṇa* (463 B.C.E.), the independent groups that wandered over India formed separate schools because they lacked central authority.[28]

The first council met in Rājagṛha in 483 B.C.E., during the three-month monsoon retreat following the *parinirvāṇa*, the death and final enlightenment of Gautama. Mahākāśyapa is said to have presided, Upāli recited the *Vinaya*, and Ānanda the five *Nikāyas* (collections of *sūtras*) which comprise the *Dharma*. The first schism occurred a century later during and after the Second Council at Vaiśālī between the Sthaviravāda (Elders) of Northeastern India and the Mahāsaṃghika (Majority) of Northwestern India who included lay people and non*arhant* (not yet enlightened) monks at their meetings. The Majority claimed to continue the open, permissive structure of the *Saṅgha* under

Gautama as opposed to the exclusivism of the Elder monks. The Elders in turn claimed to preserve the true *Dharma* by preserving strict monastic life and the authority of the monks.[29]

The only text extant from these early schools is the *Vinaya* of the Majority, preserved in Chinese translation, which differs from the *Vinaya* of the Elders on only ten rules out of 227. The differences are mostly minor, but allowing the monks to use gold and silver or eat twice per day, particularly after the noon hour, are relaxations of two of the ten major rules. The Mahāsaṃghikas also espoused two doctrines that were later taken up by the Mahāyāna; that Gautama was a manifestation of the Buddha who is transmundane and that phenomena are *māyā* (illusory) and *śūnya* (empty).[30] The latter doctrines were taken up by Nāgārjuna.

A schism among the Sthaviravāda Elders between the Second and Third Councils in roughly 280 B.C.E. established the Pudgalavāda (Personalist) school as an offshoot that survived until the eight or ninth century. The Elders maintained the *anātman* doctrine as taught by Gautama; there is no self or person, the words "I," "me," "mine" are only conventional designations. What appears as a person or self is only a collection of *skandhas* (heaps): form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saṃjñā*), karmic dispositions (*saṃskāra*), and consciousness (*vijñāna*). None of the *skandhas* is the self (*ātman*) and so conclude that the five *skandhas* taken together are not the self.[31]

The Pudgalavādins argued that the *pudgala* is neither the same as nor different than the five *skandhas*, just as fire is neither the same as nor different from the fuel. If the *pudgala* is the same as the five *skandhas* (which arise and cease), it would be annihilated, and if the *pudgala* is something other than the five *skandhas*, it would have to be eternal and unconditioned, both wrong (*mithyā*) views (*dṛṣṭi*). The *pudgala* is like the *vijñāna* (consciousness) who knows, transmigrates, and enters *nirvāṇa*.[32] Nāgārjuna later adopts a similar argument and agrees that *pudgala* is only a conventional designation and not a real one. But he goes one further step and denies that the *pudgala* is neither the same as nor different from the *skandhas*.[33]

The Personalists cite references to Gautama's use of the term "*pudgala*" (person) and maintain that there must be a "person" in order to render coherent the doctrine of moral responsibility (*karman*). That is, the person who violates a moral precept (*śīla*) must be, in some sense, the "same person" as the one who bears the karmic burden of

that transgression. Nāgārjuna later counterargues this position.[34] The Pudgalavādins further maintained that some concept of the "person" is necessary to account for the phenomenon of memory. Nāgārjuna does not attack this issue directly, but would not give memory any ultimacy because it would be delusory.[35]

The Sthaviravāda *Abhidharma* scholars argued that *dharmas* (elemental events), including the *skandhas*, are real things (*vastu*) or substances (*dravya*), more or less like atoms, while the term "person" is only a conventional designation. The Pudgalavādins agreed that the *pudgala* is not a real substance, but further asserted that *dharmas* are also not real substances, like atoms, but are events which have conventional names, commonsense designations. This is the position taken later by Nāgārjuna and the Mahāyāna against the Sthaviravāda *Abhidharma*.[36]

A subsequent schism, according to the tradition of the Elders (Sthaviravāda), occurred at the Third Council in about 237 B.C.E. at Pātaliputra and produced the Sarvāstivāda (All Exist) and the Vibhajyavāda (Distinctionist) schools.[37] The Sarvāstivāda *Tripiṭaka* is extant in Sanskrit and is the earliest complete canon. No texts remain of the Vibhajyavādins. The Sarvasātivāda *Abhidharma* masters agreed with the Sthaviravāda *Abhidharma* masters that *dharmas* are real and substantial, but reasoned further, as did the Brahmanical Sāṃkhya school, that they must exist eternally and essentially. That is, events in the past and future exist in the same way as events in the present because the cause exists in the effect and the effect exists in the cause. The Sthaviravāda and the Vibhajyavāda schools both distinguished existing past events (those which have not yet produced their results) from nonexisting past events (those which have come to fruition). Nāgārjuna counterargued the positions of all three schools, but adopted a Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma* type of analysis by four conditions the *hetu* (cause), *ālambana* (support), *anantara* (immediate), and *adhipati* (dominant).[38] Nāgārjuna and the Mahāyāna also adopted the Sarvastivāda ideal of the *bodhisattva* (an enlightening being, one who enlightens others) who vows to observe the six *pāramitās* (perfections): *dāna* (giving), *śīla* (ethics), *kṣānti* (patience), *vīrya* (vigor), *dhyāna* (meditation) and *prajñā* (wisdom), as opposed to the Elders ideal of the *arhant* (the enlightened monk, nun, or rarely, lay person) who has tread the Eightfold Path to liberation.

Shortly after the Third Council, the Theravāda (Pāli Elders) separated from the Vibhajyavādins, commited the *Tripiṭaka* to writing in the Pāli language and took the canon to Sri Lanka in 240 B.C.E., establishing a school that still thrives. The Pāli Canon, like the canons of other early schools, is full of Māgadhisms and was thus possibly derived from an earlier oral or written recitation tradition in the Māgadhī language.[39] There is thus some reason for confidence that at least sections of the Pāli *Tripiṭaka* derive from the earlier Sthaviravāda tradition which was strong in Northeast India, the region of Magadha. The Pāli Canon is traditionally assigned pride of place by Buddhists as being closest to the original teachings of Gautama.

Further divisions among the Vibhajyavādins occurred during the time of Aśoka. The Vātsīputrīya school (named after the original founder of the Pudgalavāda) seceded on the grounds that the *pudgala* is real. The Dharmottarīya, Bhadrayānīya, Sannāgarika, and Saṃmitīya schools all diverged from the Vātsīputrīya and its *Abhidharma* in nine sections. The Vātsīputrīya became known as the Saṃmitīya.[40] The Saṃmitīya *Abhidharma*, in Chinese translation, argues that the *pudgala* is not different from the *skandhas*.[41] Nāgārjuna counterargued this position.[42]

At about his same time, during the reign of Aśoka and the proliferation of *Abhidharma* texts, two schisms occurred within the Mahāsaṃghika fold; first the Ekavyavahārikas and later the Golulikas (Cinders). Late sources (Bhāvaviveka) say the Ekavyavahārikas held that thought is by nature pure and radiant and cannot be defiled.[43] This view was espoused by the Mahāyāna, especially in China. Nāgārjuna would object to attributing *svabhāva* (own-nature) to the mind because if it were by nature pure, it would have to be eternal, a wrong view. Anything which has a nature or an essence cannot change. Nāgārjuna's more radical purification move renders purity and impurity, along with desires, actions, bodies, producers, and products, as like dreams or mirages.[44] Rather than describe pure mind, Nāgārjuna purifies mind by *śūnyatā* (emptiness, openness).

A more extreme view was argued by another offshoot, possibly from the Ekavyavahārikas, the Lokottaravāda (Transcendent School). They argued that concepts arising from worldly events are delusory, only *dharmas* that transcend the world are real. The Buddha was therefore a transcendent being before the *nirvāṇa*, even before his birth. Four *Vinaya* texts in Indian languages are extant from this school,

some incorporating later additions, so that even the Buddha's body came to be seen as beyond this world. Buddhas never feel tired, dust does not stick to them, etc.[45] These doctrines were taken up by the Mahāyāna, but Nāgārjuna would object on the grounds stated above.

The Golulikas (Pāli Kukkulika), the other early school that split from the Mahāsaṃghikas, held that all worldly events involve *duḥkha* (suffering, unhappiness) and that the five *skandhas* are nothing but cinders.[46] They were specialists in *Abhidharma* who gave rise to two other schools, the Bahuśritīya (Learned) and the Prajñāptivāda (Concept) schools towards the end of the third century B.C.E.[47] The Bahuśritīya, like the Golulikas, held that all *dharmas* are false, only *nirvāṇa* (extinction of craving), *duḥkha* (suffering), *anitya* (impermanence), *anātman* (no self), and *śūnyatā* (emptiness) are ultimately real. Perceiving the impermanence of the *skandhas* is knowledge of *śūnyatā*, but even the thought of emptiness ceases in *nirvāṇa*. Nāgārjuna held that even *śūnyatā* is *śūnya* (empty). The Bahuśritīya also held that the teachings of the Buddha (*Dharma*) on *nirvāṇa* were transcendent while the others were worldly.[48]

The Prajñāptivāda, the other offshoot from the Gokulika, may have exerted considerable influence on Nāgārjuna. He does not refer to the school and none of their texts are extant. However, the only *sūtra* referred to by name in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* is the *Kātyāyanāvavāda* (Pāli, *Kaccāyanagotta Sutta*) which distinquishes *āstitva* (existence) from *nāstitva* (nonexistence). While early schools generally recognize Śāriputra as the master of systematic exposition, the Prajñāptivāda credit Kātyāyāna, praised by Gautama in the *Ekottara Āgama* for detailed explanations of concise teachings. A *śāstra* (treatise) attributed to Kātyāyāna was handed down in the Prajñāptivāda *Abhidharma* distinquishing the ultimate level of truth (*paramārtha*) from the conventional or concealing level of truth (*saṃvṛti*) in the *sūtras*.[49] This distinction was taken up by Nāgārjuna and is central to his work as well as to the Mahāyāna. It is an expository working out of a distinction present in two and possibly three of the early *sūtras* between terms that are *nītārtha* (having its meaning drawn out) and those which are *neyārtha* (requiring its meaning to be drawn out).[50] Further, the Prajñāptivāda schism and name arose from their distinction between *tattva dharmas* (real, true, factual events) and *prajñāpti* (mere concepts). In this system, the twelve *āyatanas* (six senses and six sense objects) and the eighteen *dhātus* (elements) are *prajñāpti* while the

skandhas and *duḥkha* are real.[51] Nāgārjuna assigns all these to *prajñapti*.

Following Aśoka's death in 232 B.C.E., three schools diverged from the Theravāda, splitting south, north, and west, respectively. The Mahīśāsakas agreed with the Elders that the *arhant* cannot relapse but took up the Sarvāstivādin doctrine that past and future *dharmas* exist, including those that have already come to fruition. The Kāśyapīyas (or Haimavatas) agreed with the Mahāsaṃghikas that *arhants* can relapse but disagreed with the Sarvāstivādins and the Mahīśāsakas, arguing that past *dharmas* that have come to fruition do not exist.[52] The Dharmaguptaka emphasized honoring *stūpas*, missionized extensively outside India and were the main Buddhist school in China during the early period.[53]

A further schism over entrance into the *Saṅgha* occurred within the Mahāsaṃghikas, producing the Caitika school in the mid-first century B.C.E. which in turn gave rise to two other schools, the Apara Śaila and the Uttara Śaila (Pūrva Śaila, possibly Old Śaila).[54] The Caitikas and two Śaila schools apparently emphasized the transcendence of all the Buddha's discourse (*vyavahāra*) as well as the strengths (*bala*) and power (*ṛddhi*) of the Buddha and his students to transcend the laws of nature. The students were *bodhisattvas*, as was the Buddha in his former lives, and were aiming to be *buddhas*, not *arhants*.[55] These are the seeds of the Mahāyāna ideal that replaced the final goal of of *nirvāṇa* with that of *buddhatva* (buddhahood).[56] The ideal of the *bodhisattva* was accepted by Nāgārjuna, as was the path of six, later elaborated as ten, stages (*bhūmi*) leading to the goal of *buddhatva*.[57]

This accounts for the eighteen schools of early Buddhism, provided the two Śaila schools are counted as one and the cutoff point is roughly 50 B.C.E.[58] The Tibetan historian Bu-ston reports that the eighteen schools had committed their oral canons to writing by the first century C.E. or earlier.[59] It is unlikely that Nāgārjuna was unfamiliar with them. However, schisms continued and the Theravāda in Sri Lanka gave rise to the Abhayagirivāsins in 38 B.C.E. and the Jetavanīyas in 300 C.E. The Caitikas split twice, into the Rāgagirikas and the Siddhārthikas, remaining in the Āndhra region. The two schools are said to have held that *dharmas* are not classifiable under other *dharmas* or conjoined with them, and that mental *dharmas* (*caitasikas*, i.e., *saṃskāras*) do not exist.[60] More important for the geneology of Nāgārjuna's philosophy are the Sarvāstivādins in the north, who gave

rise to the Sautrāntikas (and possibly the Saṃkrāntikas, likely a corruption of the name of the former) between 50 B.C.E. to the early second century and the Mūlasarvāstivādins, especially in Gandhāra and Kaśmīra, in the third and fourth centuries.

Interestingly a Sarvāstivādin *Abhidharma* text, the *Vijñānakāya*, refutes the Vātsīputrīya *pudgala* theory by arguing that *dharmas* are empty of a "person." The Sarvāstivādins refer to themselves in this text as *śūnyatāvādins*.[61] Nāgārjuna went further and emptied *dharmas* of *āstika* (existence) and became known, along with the Mādhyamika (Middle Way) school, as *śūnyatāvādins par excellence*.

The Sautrāntikas rejected *Abhidharma* theories generally and returned to the *sūtras* for authority. It is said they separated off from the Sarvāstivādins and their elaborate and lengthy *Abhidharma* during a council in circa 100 C.E. Thereafter the Sautrāntikas became critics of *Abhidharma* tradition, accepting only those views supported by the *sūtras*.[62] They posited an *āśraya* (substratum) in place of the *pudgala* to account for continuity and moral responsibility, but considered the view only a useful fiction (*prajñāpti*). The hypothesis was that volitions perfume or suffuse (*vāsanā*) the *āśraya*, so that the action (*karma*), though past, gives rise to future actions as a seed (*bija*) planted later bears fruit (*phala*).[63] The theory became important in the Mahāyāna Yogācāra school which had close affinities to Madhyamaka. Nāgārjuna was also a critic of *Abhidharma* who referred to the *sūtras* for authority, but unlike the Sautrāntikas, he did not profer explanatory hypotheses but rather argued against positions that ran counter to the *sūtras* as a whole.

Orthodox Sarvāstivadins became known after this time as Vaibhāṣikas.[64] The Mūlasarvāstivādins rewrote and elaborated the *Tripiṭaka* in Sanskrit. Lindtner suggests that their recension of the Discourse at Benares on the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path was the one most likely known to Nāgārjuna.[65] The date given above for this school (third to fourth century C.E.) is difficult to reconcile with Nāgārjuna's earlier date, but the name Mūlasarvāstiāvāda (Basic Sarvāstivāda) suggests a perception of originality and may indicate earlier roots or the incorporation of Sarvāstivādin Sanskrit translations within the Mūlasarvāstivādin corpus.

The affinity of Nāgārjuna's arguments with the early Buddhist *Abhidharma* themes presented above is evident. However, this affinity is not attested by direct quotation. Often the original *Abhidharma* texts

are no longer extant and information concerning their contents comes to us from secondary sources of varying degrees of reliability. Other texts are extant only in Chinese translation and thus likely varied considerably from the originals. The Tibetan translations have been found to have been faithful to the originals where comparisons can be made. Nāgārjuna was, after all, a Buddhist and it stands to reason that he was debating not abstract views held by no one at all, but *dṛṣṭi* (views) expressed by Buddhists who had, in his understanding, strayed from *sūtra* traditions and the general thrust of Gautama's insight. Further, the views against which Nāgārjuna pits his logical skills are mainly Buddhist rather than nonBuddhist views, and so we may suppose that he was debating not disembodied texts, but living Buddhist monks representing their various schools and traditions at Nālandā in Magadha.

The similarity of Nāgārjuna's themes and sometimes treatments with those of the *Abhidharma* scholarship suggests that he was well-versed in Mahāsaṃghika, Pudgalavāda, Sarvāstivāda, Theravada, Bahuśrīya, and Prajñāptivāda *Abhidharma* traditions. He may have also have been responding to views deriving from Ekavyavahāra, Golulika, Lokottaravāda, Caitaka, and the two Śaila traditions. The chapter titles of his central work, the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, point to *Abhidharma* debate.

Finally, Nāgārjuna also counterargued views presented not in Theravāda *Abhidharma*, but in a later commentary written about it, the *Peṭakopadeśa*, a work on logic as well as scholastic methodology for interpreting texts for teaching purposes.[66] It also introduces new doctrines, particularly that the *hetu* (cause) is the *svabhāva* (own-nature) of a *dharma* (an event), while the *pratyaya* (condition) is *parabhāva* (other-nature).[67] That is, the cause is internal while the conditions are external. Other schools adopted this text into their canons and Nāgārjuna subsequently attacks the doctrine with unreserved vigor in the opening chapter of and throughout the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*.[68]

Better textual support exists for Nāgārjuna's indebtedness to the *Sūtra Piṭaka* (Basket of Discourses by Gautama). The eighteen schools of Early Buddhism all share the same four *sūtra* collections in the same order of length and a few schools share a fifth:[69]

1. *Dīrgha Āgama* (*Nikāya* in Pāli) — The Long Tradition (about thirty of the longest discourses)

2. *Madhyama Āgama* — The Middle Tradition (150 discourses of intermediate length)
3. *Saṃyukta Āgama* — The Connected Tradition (discourses arranged according to topic)
4. *Ekottara Āgama* — One and Up Tradition (discourses arranged according to numbers of items)
5. *Kṣudraka Āgama* — Minor Tradition (discourses of doubtful authenticity or composed by followers of Gautama, mostly in verse)

Warder's detailed study shows that Nāgārjuna treats the *sūtras* with respect. The only *sūtra* actually named is the *Kātyāyanāvavāda*, found in all the recensions of the *Tripiṭaka* according to Candrakīrti.[70]

> In the Instructions to Kātyāyana, "it is" and "it is not" were demonstrated
> by the Buddha as causing the appearance of existence and nonexistence.[71]

Nāgārjuna introduces chapter twelve of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Treatise on the Middle Way) by quoting the *Acelakāśyapa Sūtra* in the *Saṃyukta Āgama* and the four positions rejected by Gautama in favor of interdependent origination (*pratītya samutpāda*).

> Some say: "suffering is self-caused, caused by another, caused by both or uncaused." But it (suffering) does not occur as an effect.[72]

Kalupahana points out that the first three terms are identical to those in the *Acelakāśyapa*, namely *svayaṃ kṛtam*, *parakṛtam*, and *dvābhyāṃ kṛtam*, whereas the fourth term, *ahetukaṃ* is synonymous with (Pāli) *adhiccasamuppana*, "to arise one on top of another," as opposed to *paṭiccasamuppana*, "arising by moving towards or depending on another."[73] Following Gautama, Nāgarjuna argues here that suffering cannot be uncaused and yet neither can it be self-caused or caused by something external, or both.

Nāgārjuna again reaffirms the original teachings of Gautama in quoting the *Anavarāgra Saṃyukta*:

> The Great Sage has said "the prior limit of *saṃsāra*, without beginning or end, is unknown, for indeed, there is no beginning or end."[74]

Nāgārjuna again defers to Gautama's teachings in quoting the *Dhātuvibhaṅga Sūtra* in the *Madhyama Āgama*:

> The Venerable One said; "whatever event is deceptive, that is false." Deceptive events are in all dispositions, so they are false.[75]

Warder also suggests that Nāgārjuna must have been following some version of the *Brahmajāla Sūtra* in rejecting all *dṛṣṭis* (speculative views) because key *sūtra* terms are employed in the *kārikā*, such as *pūrvānta* (former end), *aparānta* (after end of the universe) and *ātman* (self or soul).[76]

It is clear from our initial study that Nāgārjuna was fully respectful of the early *sūtras* and the Buddhist tradition and early Buddhist scholars erred in seeing him as an iconoclast. His aim was to reaffirm the Middle Way as originally propounded by Gautama. His debate was with the *Abhidharma* and later commentarial traditions of the classical eighteen early schools. Nāgārjuna debated and wrote during a creative period that saw the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism and a flood of new texts, most importantly, the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, in their numerous abbreviated and elaborated versions, as well as the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, from which he may have drawn but more likely to which he contributed. It was a vibrant period for Indian Buddhism and Nāgārjuna's work exerted a lasting influence on later schools well beyond his time and place.

Notes

1. Hajime Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism, A Survey with Bibliographical Notes*, Japan, K.F.U.S. Publications, 1980, 235 and Edward Conze, *A Short History of Indian Buddhism*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1980, 51. Numerous others similarly date Nāgārjuna. However, T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1955, 88, notes that "tradition" places Nāgārjuna 400 A.N. or 400 years after the *parinirvāṇa* or death of the Buddha. Possibly he is referring to the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* which predicts that a Nāgāhvaya will appear 400 years A. N. Richard H. Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika In India and China*, New York, Samuel Weiser and Co., 1978, 22, cites Hakuji Ui's dating of 113 to 213 C.E. but seems to favor as "very plausible" the recalculation by Etienne Lamotte, *L'enseignement de Vimalakirti*, Louvain, Bibliothèque du Muséon, 1962, 70-77, that he "flourished" in 243 C.E. or 880 A.N.

2. Southern Buddhists date the *parinirvāṇa* in 544 B.C.E. and therefore the birth of the Buddha at 624 B.C.E. A dot was marked in the

Vinaya each year after *vassa* and tradition has it that this was done by the *bhikkus* without fail. The 2,500th anniversary of the *parinirvāṇa* was celebrated in India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Burma in 1956. This tradition is inconsistent with the dating of the kings of Magadha, according to Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism*, 13. Northern Buddhists follow the dot counting of Saṅghabhadra who went to China in 489 C.E. and who counted at that time 975 dots, placing the *parinirvāṇa* in 485 B.C.E. and the birth in 566 B.C.E. According to Professor Pachow, the *Dotted Record* places the *parinirvāṇa* in 483 B.C.E. and the birth in 563 B.C.E. Professor Geiger came to the same result from a study of the Pāli chronicles. Western scholars have since followed the Northern Buddhist tradition in dating, as for example, Eggermont, *The Chronology of the Reign of Aśoka Moriya*, Leiden, Brill, 1956, Bareau, *"La Date du Nirvāṇa,"* *Journal Asiatique*, Paris, Société Asiatique, 1953, 27ff., and A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1970, 44. Nakamura says that Kanakura followed Jacobi who set the *parinirvāṇa* at 484 B.C.E. Winternitz argued Gautama was a contemporary of Bimbasāra and Ajataśatru who lived in the sixth and fifth centuries. Nakamura argues that this dating begs the question and concurs with Hajiku Ui's dating of 466 to 386 B.C.E. based on Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese sources, modifying his conclusion slightly to 463-383 B.C.E. in light of his research on Aśoka, 13-15.

3. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1970, 374, cites Lévi, *Journal Asiatique*, Paris, Société Asiatique, 1936, 75ff., on the connection between Candana and Kaniṣka.

4. A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that Was India*, Fontana, Collins Press, 1967, 62.

5. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, p. 375. David S. Ruegg, *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Buddhism*, Wiesbaden, Germany, Otto Harrassowitz, 1981, 54.

6. A. K. Warder, "Is Nāgārjuna a Mahāyānist?" in M. Sprung, ed., *The Problem of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta*, Dordrecht, Holland, D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1973, 78-88.

7. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 375.

8. Edward Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines, and Its Verse Summary*, San Francisco, Four Seasons, 1973, x-xi.

9. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 375.

10. R. Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in India and China*, 27.

11. A. K. Warder, "Is Nāgārjuna A Mahāyānist"? 78.

12. Ven. Losang Jamspal, Ven. Nga Wang Samten Chophel, and Peter Santina, trans., *Nāgārjuna's Letter to King Gautamīputra* (the *Suhṛllekha*, usually cited as *A Letter To A Friend*), Dehli, Motilal Banarāsidass, 1978, lines 120b-121, 66.

13. Jeffrey Hopkins, and Lati Rinpoche, trans., *The Precious Garland and the Song of the Four Mindfulnesses*, New York, Harper & Row, 1975, line 379, 74.

14. A. K. Warder, "Is Nāgārjuna a Mahāyānist?," 79.

15. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 375.

16. Etiene Lamotte, *Le Traité de La Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nāgārjuna*, Louvain, Bibliothèque du Muséon, Institut Orientaliste, Publications Universitaires, Vol. I, 1949, Chap. XII, xiii. Lamotte cites Louis de La Vallée Poussin, R. Grousset, and J. Burgess concerning the

inscriptions.

17. Ven. Jamspal, et al., *Nāgārjuna's Letter to King Gautamīputra*, xiv.

18. David J. Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna, The Philosophy of the Middle Way*, New York, State University of New York Press, 1986.

19. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 9.

20. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 377.

21. Theodore Stcherbatsky, T. R. V. Murti, Richard Robinson, Louis de La Vallée Poussin, Étienne Lamotte, Edward Conze, Frederick Streng, Hajime Nakamura, Kenneth Inada, M. Saigussa, et al., have all treated Nāgārjuna as a Mahāyānist. A. K. Warder, who raised the question originally, thinks it "quite likely" he was. It is worth noting that, unlike Christianity, Buddhism does not depend on the historical accuracy of its doctrine. The quest for the historical Nāgārjuna, a necessary and important task, may have created a fictitious religious figure. It may be the myths about Nāgārjuna have had more important repercussions within the history of Buddhism than the facts which are important to scholars. We should not forget, in our quest for certainty, that the object of study is the Buddhist religion. It is important to distinguish the mythical Nāgārjuna, an object of veneration, from the historical Nāgārjuna, an object of study. It is also likely that the latter will exert some influence on the former. For example, Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, suggests, in another context, that it may be better to read *nāgara* "of the cities" for *nāga*, 216. Magadha was an urban center, but Nāgārjuna is traditionally represented in sculpture and painting surrounded by serpents.

22. Bu-ston (1290-1364) lists six main texts by Nāgārjuna; *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, *Vigrahavyāvartinī*, *Śūnyatāsaptati*, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, *Vaidalyasūtra Prakaraṇa*, and *Vyavahārasiddhi*, plus minor texts. Tāranātha (1574-1608) lists the first five above, in Richard Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in India and China*, 26. Singh's "Introduction" to Stcherbatsky lists the seven of Bu-ston plus *Pratītyasamutpādahṛdaya*, *Catuḥstava*, *Bhāvanākrama*, *Suhṛllekha*, *Bhavasaṃkrānti*, *Ratnāvalī*, *Prajñāpāramitaśāstra* *Daśabhūmivibhāṣāśāstra*, and *Ekaślokaśāstra* in Theodore Stcherbatsky, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, New York, Gordon Press, 1977, 6. T. R. V. Murti lists Tāranātha's five plus *Ratnāvalī*, *Catuḥstava*, *Pratītyasamutpādahṛdaya* and *Bhavasamkrāntiśāstra* since they are quoted by Candrakīrti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, 88-91. Robinson thinks there is no reason to impeach the authenticity of the *Suhṛllekha* because it was translated into Chinese by Guṇavarman and Saṅghavarman shortly after 430 C.E., Richard Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in India and China*, 27.

23. Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana, Studies in the Writings and Philosophy of Nāgārjuna*, Copenhagen, Akademisk Forlag, 1982.

24. Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 10. The commentaries attended to closely are: *Akutobhayā*, *Buddhapālitavṛtti*, and *Prajñāpradīpa* by Bhavya; *Prajñāpradīpaṭīkā* by Avalokitavrata; and *Prasannapadā* by Candrakīrti.

25. Texts decidedly spurious are *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*, *Abudha-bodhakaprakaraṇa*, *Guhyasamājatantraṭīkā*, *Dvādaśadvāraka*, *Prajñāpāramitāstotra*, and *Svabhāvatrayapraveśasiddhi* in

Nagarjuniana, 11-12. The majority of texts fall in the middle and have been divided into those that are perhaps genuine; *Mahāyānaviṃśikā*, *Bodhicittotpādavidhi*, *Dvādaśa-kāraṇayastotra*, (*Madhyamaka*-) *Bhavasaṃkrānti*, *Nirālambastava*, *Śālistambakārikā*, *Stutyatītastava*, *Dānaparikathā*, *Cittavajrastava*, *Mūlasarvāstivādisrāmaṇerakārikā*, *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣā*, *Lokaparīkṣā*, *Yogaśataka*, *Prajñādaṇḍa*, *Raṣavaiśeṣikasūtra*, and *Bhāvanākrama*; and those most probably not genuine; *Akṣaraśataka*, *Akutobhayā* (*Mūlamadhyamakavṛtti*), *Āryabhāṭṭaraka Mañjuśrīparamārthastuti*, *Kāyatrayastotra*, *Narakoddharastava*, *Niruttarastava*, *Vandanāstava*, *Dharma-saṃgraha*, *Dharmadhātugarbhavivaraṇa*, *Ekaślokaśastra*, *Īśvarakartṛtva-nirākṛti*, *Sattvārādhanastava*, *Upāyahṛdaya*, *Aṣṭādaśaśūnyatāśāstra*, *Dharmadhātustava*, *Yogaratnamālā*, etc. in *Nagarjuniana*, 12-17. *Prakaraṇa* and *Vaidalyasūtra* count as one text in Lindtner's reckoning.

26. Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana* 21n, cites May's rejoinder to Warder in Chūgan, 473, Etienne Lamotte on the term "*gandharvanagara*," *Traité*, 371n1, and the connection of *MK* XIII, 8 to the Kāśyapaparivarta, *Traité*, 1227, and P. D. Vaidya, *Études sur Āryadeva et son Catuḥśataka*, Paris, 1923, 21n6, on the connection of *MK* XXIV, 8 to the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa*.

27. Richard H. Robinson and Willard L. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction*, Duxbury Mass., Duxbury Press, 1977, 64. Again, the dates of the Pāli Canon are not fixed with certainty.

28. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 211.

29. Robinson and Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion*, 68.

30. Robinson and Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion*, 86.

31. Robinson and Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion*, 68. The *sūtras* are ambiguous on the conclusion that the five *skandhas* taken together do not comprise the self.

32. Robinson and Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion*, 68-69.

33. *MK* XII, 4-6.

34. *MK* XIV and elsewhere.

35. *MK* XIII, 1.

36. Robinson and Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion*, 69.

37. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, follows Eggermont and Bareau in suggesting 237 B.C.E., the date of an Aśoka edict concerning schism which, they argue, was the Sthaviravāda/Sarvastivāda split. They further suggest that the Third Council never occurred but was invented by the Elders to show an unbroken lineage to the school in Sri Lanka, 273-74.

38. *MK* XI, *MK* I, and Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 223-24. The terms occur in the *sūtras*, but never together as in the *Abhidharma*. The Theravāda *Patthāṇa* lists twenty-four conditions including these four, 310.

39. The Buddha taught in the region of Magadha, as well as in other states, and may have spoken a precursor of Māgadhī (Ardhamāgadhī), Robinson, and Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion*, 64. However, Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, argues that in an old, but not earliest text, Gautama says to King Bimbisāra that he is from Kośala, and therefore he likely spoke that dialect. Whatever language the Buddha spoke, it seems likely that an early tradition in Māgadhī existed, which may simply reflect the political eminence of that city, 45 and 207.

40. Edward Conze, *A Short History of Buddhism*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1980, 37.

41. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 275-76.
42. *MK* II.
43. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 242.
44. *MK* XVII, 29-33.
45. A. K Warder *Indian Buddhism*, 276.
46. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 275.
47. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 277.
48. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 277 and 329.
49. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 220.
50. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 150. The distinction occurs in the *Saṅgīti Sūtra* in the Theravāda *Dīrgha Nikāya* and the *Ekottara*.
51. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 278.
52. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 296.
53. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 289 and 296.
54. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 290n1
55. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 329.
56. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 328.
57. Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 267.
58. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 288.
59. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 294. Theravādins record that their canon was written down in the first century B.C.E. The Sarvāstivāda canon was first written in Prakrit and put into Sanskrit in the first centuries of the common era, 295. Though it is the earliest complete canon, it is the least conservative and longest and thus evidently contains many later additions., 297 and 341.
60. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 328.
61. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 346.
62. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 346.
63. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 347.
64. Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1962, 141-43.
65. Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 253.
66. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 316.
67. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 318.
68. *MK* I and ff.
69. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 202-3.
70. A. K. Warder, "Is Nāgārjuna a Mahāyānist?" in M. Sprung ed., 79.
71. *MK* XV, 7.
72. *MK* XII, 1.
73. David Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna, The Philosophy of the Middle Way*, 211 and 215.
74. *MK*, XI, 1. Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1953, reports that the term "*anavarāgra*," without beginning or end, is also used of *śūnyatā* in *Mahāyutpatti*.
75. *MK* XIII, 1.
76. *MK* XXVII, 1 and 2.

Chapter Two: The Mahāyāna Background

The rise of the Mahāyāna is not fully understood. Professor Edward Conze, who devoted more than thirty years to the study of the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts associated with the rise of the Mahāyāna, believes they originated in South India as "an irruption into Buddhism of the devotion to the Mother Goddess current in the more matriarchial Dravidian society" and made Buddhism a universal religion.[1] Devotionalism was given greater compass in the Mahāyāna, but the new doctrines were also a natural outgrowth of the earlier teachings. Following Professor Ninian Smart's rule of thumb, "any doctrine that can arise will arise," the Mahāyāna can also be seen as the logical workings out of implications present in the *Sūtra*, *Vinaya*, and *Abhidharma* texts of the early schools. The Mahāyāna was logically inevitable and history was kind enough to let the logic unfold.

The Mahāyāna developed partly from the Mahāsaṃghika school with its greater embracing of lay people and ordinary life as opposed to the monasticism of the Elders. Gautama's last words, as recorded in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, were that the *Dharma* (Gautama's teachings) would now be the guide and teacher, i.e., the Buddha. Since these teachings were there to be discovered empirically by any person who diligently affixed the seat of her robe to the seat of her meditation spot, the *Dharma* came to be seen as timeless. Since the teachings are the Buddha, Buddha came to be seen as timeless, the *dharmakāya*. Nāgārjuna argued that it would be a mistake to hypostatize the *Dharma* as existing in some eternal realm.

When Gautama realized *nirvāṇa* (liberation), he did not disappear into the void, but skillfully taught (*upāya kauśala*) the path to freedom

for more than forty years out of compassion (*karuṇā*). The goal of the Mahāyāna was not to aim for *nirvāṇa* and thus *arhant*ship (sainthood) but to realize full *buddha*hood, to embody the teachings and to act out of compassion, postponing *nirvāṇa* until all beings are liberated. This newer *bodhisattvayāna* (the raft of one who enlightens others) models itself on the path of Gautama who was a *bodhisattva* in previous lives practicing the six *pāramitās* (perfections) until he became a *buddha* (one who is awake).[2]

The *bodhisattva*'s practice of the six perfections toward the goal of *buddha*hood were first presented in the *Bodhisattva Piṭakas* of the Bahuśrutīya and probably Pūrva Śaila schools. They were incorporated in the *MahāRatnakūṭa Sūtra*, a collection of forty-nine *sūtras*, including the *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra*, extant in Sanskrit, that are considered the earliest of the Mahāyāna texts. It and a few of the others were translated into Chinese toward the end of the second century which would indicate the Sanskrit texts would have been available to Nāgārjuna.[3] The *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra* proclaims the way of the *bodhisattva* superior to the way of the "pupils" (*arhants*) and research *buddhas* (*pratyeka buddhas*) and thus opens the chasm that came to divide Mahāyāna (Great Raft carrying all beings) from earlier, more individualistic schools.[4]

The *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra* adds two views to the Theravāda *Abhidharma* list of four wrong views and their antidotes; attention to reasoning which intiates *parikalpita* (imaginations), *prajñāpti* (constructions), and *vikalpa* (imaginings), the antidote to which is *alakṣaṇa* (signlessness); and attachment to the three kinds of existence, the antidote to which is *apraṇihita* (wishlessness).[5] Nāgārjuna is much concerned with *prajñāpti* and *vikalpa* as well as *alakṣaṇa*. The term "*appaṇihita*" applied to *vimokka* describes *nibbāna* in the Pāli texts.

Significantly, the *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra* says monks (not *bodhisattvas*) will be freed when they realize that *dharmas* are neither permanent nor impermanent, they are empty (*śūnya*).[6] All pairs of opposites; self/nonself, real/unreal, good/bad, worldly/transcendent, conditioned/ unconditioned, etc. are like *asti/nāsti* (existence and nonexistence), the original pairs in the *Kātyāyanāvavāda Sūtra*. *Dharmas* are not *nitya* (permanent), as held by the Theravāda *Abhidharma*, nor *anitya* (impermanent), as held in all early *suttas*, meaning *dharmas* are not

nonexistent. Rather they are *śūnya* (empty). *Dharmas*, like all else, arise depending on conditions (*pratītya samutpāda*) which is the middle way (*madhyama pratipadā*). This is the position later argued by Nāgārjuna and to which he reduces all opposing views.[7]

Another early Mahāyāna *sūtra*, the *Amitābhavyūha* or *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, describes the world from the Mahāyāna perspective of emptiness, signlessness, wishlessness, not being born, etc., that is, the western buddha field (*buddhakṣetra*) of Amitābha (Endless Light). The Mahāyāna Yogācārin concept of the *saṃbhogakāya* (the bliss body of the Buddha) is a logical working out of the earlier Mahāsaṃghika view that *buddhas* are present in all directions and in numerous worlds or fields. These *buddhas* represent the happiness inherent in the *bodhisattva* who realizes the timeless *Dharma*. The *saṃbhogakāya buddhas* are products of concentration, but by the third century they also became useful in devotional contexts as objects of worship and hope.

While the early schools did not maintain a three-body doctine, Gautama was seen as having a *rūpakāya* (form or physical body) to which the student should not become attached, a *dharmakāya* (body of truth) and an ability to conjure up *nirmāṇakāya* (apparition bodies). To the Mahāyāna, it seemed impossible that the historical Gautama could have entered *nirvāṇa* and become forever extinct. Eventually the logic unfolded and Gautama came to be seen as *nirmaṇakāya*, as an appearance of reality, an apparition of the timeless *Dharma* or Truth. This is not a docetic conception in that all worldly phenomena, Gautama included, are impermanent and insubstantial and thus only *māyā*, apparitions or appearances, not real.[8] For Nāgārjuna, the arising and passing of worldly events or phenomena (*pratītya samutpāda*) is not ultimate reality but neither is there any reality beyond that.[9]

The most important of the many *Prajñāpāramitā* (Perfection of Wisdom) *sūtras* for Nāgārjuna is the earliest, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (*Aṣṭa*), composed between 100 B.C.E. and 150 C.E.[10] The first thirty-two chapters are in verse and are known separately as the *Ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā* (*Rgs*). Conze argues and Yuyama concurs that the first two verse chapters form the core of the work and may be as early as 100 B.C.E., the earliest *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.[11] The verses are in *vasantatilakā* meter and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit dialect,

and thus were most likely not much tampered with in later recensions. The *Aṣṭa* is in prose and contains elaborations of the first twenty-eight verse chapters as well as an almost equal amount of other material not covered in the verses.[12]

The philosophy of the *Aṣṭa* is virtually identical with that of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (*MK*) which has been viewed by Conze as the logic of the *Aṣṭa*, stripped of literary device and directed polemically to early schools.[13] The *MK* is in grammatically perfect Sanskrit and is no doubt later. For the moment, two related concepts presented in the *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra*, the *Ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā* (*Rgs*) and and the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* are of particular relevance to Nāgārjuna's thought; *ākāśa* (space) and *apratīhistita* (not settling down), or *anālaya* (nothing to settle in), or *anāgrahā* (nothing to grasp).[14] Thought is like space (*ākāśa*) in the *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra* because it has no own-nature (*svabhāva*), being unproduced (*ajāta*) and unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*).[15] Space becomes the central metaphor for *śūnyatā* (emptiness, openness) in the *Ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā* and throughout the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. These works provide the literary background from which Nāgārjuna later reworks the meaning of the term "*śūnyatā*." The metaphor likening wisdom to space occurs in the second chapter of dialect verse in the *Rgs*. The first two lines indicate an understanding of the *skandhas* (strands that comprise a person) and *prajñā* (wisdom) that predates the *Heart Sūtra*:

II

9. Form is not wisdom and wisdom is not form,
Just as with feeling, perception, will and consciousness.
They are not wisdom and wisdom is not in them.
Wisdom is like space, without a break or crack.

10. The nature of supporting conditions is boundless,
As the nature of beings is boundless,
As the nature of the space is boundless,
Just so the wisdom of the world-knowers is boundless.[16]

In the early *Rgs*, wisdom is like space, boundless and without limits. In a later chapter (VII) of *Rgs*, the perfection of wisdom is like space in that nothing real is established:

When one who develops wisdom to the end does not seize on the least *dharma*,

Conditioned or unconditioned, dark or bright
Then one comes to speak in the world of the perfection of wisdom,
[Which is like] space, wherein nothing real whatsoever is established.[17]

Spaciousness is closely connected in early *Rgs* (ch. II) to a new conception of the homelessness (*anāgarikā*) of Gautama, the leader:

The Leader himself was not stationed in the realm which is free from conditions,
Nor in things which are under conditions, but freely he wandered without a home.[18]

That is, the Buddha dwells in *śūnyatā* which is freedom. *Śūnyatā* is held to have greater value in *Rgs* XXVII than the *arhant's* realization of *nirvāṇa* which is merely a blessed rest (*nirvṛti*).

A bird dwells in space [the sky], but does not fall down.
A fish dwells amidst water, but does not die.
Just so the *bodhisattva* who through the trances and powers has gone beyond,
Dwells in the empty [*śūnya*], but does not reach the Blessed Rest [*nirvṛti*].
One who wants to go to the summit of the qualities of all beings,
To experience the best, the exceedingly wonderful, Buddha-cognition,
To give the best gift of the highest and supreme *Dharma*,
He should resort to this best dwelling of those who bring benefit.[19]

The perfection of wisdom is synonymous with *śūnyatā* in the *Aṣṭa*:

Subhūti said; Hence Bhagavan might now indicate the great *bodhisattva's* deep practice that must connect him to the perfection of wisdom.

The Venerable Bhagavan said this to Subhūti; "Deep," Subhūti, of emptiness this is a synonym, this is a synonym also, Subhūti, of the signless, of the wishless, of the uneffected, of the unproduced, of non-existence and no-birth, of dispassion, of cessation, of extinction and of departing.[20]

Śūnyatā is synonymous in the *Aṣṭa* with the deep practice of the perfection of wisdom and, like space, is deep or profound:

Subhūti; Deep, O Lord, is the perfection of wisdom.
Bhagavan; Perfect wisdom is deep like the depth of space.[21]

Śūnyatā is also synonymous in the *Aṣṭa* with the term *"aprameya"* (immeasurable) which defines space:

> Subhūti said; But of what is "immeasurable" a synonym?
> Bhagavan said; "Immeasurable," this is a synonym of emptiness, Subhūti, this is a synonym of signless. "Immeasurable," this is a synonym of wishless, Subhūti.[22]

The term 'immeasurable' (along with 'unthinkable,' 'incomparable,' 'incalculable' and 'equal to the unequalled') defines the concept of space in the *Aṣṭa*:

> [Bhagavan says, referring to his experience of events that]:
> Events are immeasurable, incalcuable, equal to the unequalled because they are the same as space, immeasurable, incalculable, equal to the unequalled.
> These events are incomparable in the same sense in which space is incomparable.
> Therefore Subhūti, events are said to be incomparable.
> Events are unthinkable because space is unthinkable.
> Events are incomparable because space is incomparable.
> Events are immeasurable because space is immeasurable.
> Events are incalculable because space is incalcuable.
> Events are equal to the unequalled because space is equal to the unequalled.[23]

By hypothetical syllogism, if space is immeasurable and immeasurability is synonymous with *śūnyatā*, then space is *śūnyatā*. In the *Aṣṭa*, *śūnyatā* is deep, boundless, immeasurable, free, and nothing real is established in it. But is space "empty"?

Leucippus and Democritus, Greek pre-Socratic philosophers, argued against Parmenides' view that everything exists by holding that nothing does in fact exist, namely the empty space between objects, in their theory of atoms and the void: "Nothing is, just like being is."[24] This view is similar to that of the *Aṣṭa* which holds that space is an existing nothing; it both is and is not.

> And so the long-lived Subhūti said this to Bhagavan;
> This is a perfection of what is not because of the existence of space.
> This is a perfection equal to the unequalled because all events cannot be recognized.
> This is a perfection of clarity because *śūnyatā* is beyond limit.[25]

The *Aṣṭa* view contrasts with the Cartesian position that an absolute vacuum cannot exist. For Descartes, matter is extension, so the idea that there can be space (extension) that does not contain matter is a contradiction in terms.[26] The Buddhist view contrasts also with the modern concept of outer space as void, dark, and empty.

In contrast to the conception of space in the *Aṣṭa* as both existing and not existing, Nāgārjuna argues that space (*ākāśa*), like all other *dharmas*, neither exists nor does not exist, it is *śūnya*.

> Therefore space is neither an existent nor a nonexistent, neither the characterized nor a characteristic.
> The other five elements are the same as space.
>
> But those of inferior insight who see only the existence and nonexistence of beings do not see the emancipating cessation of appearances.[27]

The root meaning of the term "*śūnyatā*" from which Nāgārjuna derives his usage is its earlier metaphorical meaning in the *Ratna*, *Rgs*, and *Aṣṭa*. Perfect wisdom, *śūnyatā*, is like space. It cannot be grasped or gotten ahold of. It provides no basis or support.

The view of space presented in the *Rgs* and the *Aṣṭa* is an agrarian view, an ancient preindustrial, pristine and rural view which derives from looking straight up at a deep, blue, clear, vast, and boundless sky. The Goddess of Wisdom, *Prajñāpāramitā*, symbolizes the sky.[28] The color symbol of wisdom (*prajñā*) is blue. In *Rgs*, the *bodhisattva* who dwells in perfect wisdom dwells in the sky:

> The *bodhisattva* . . . becomes one who, like a cloud, stands in the sky without anywhere to stand on.[29]

Buddhist space is not interestingly described as empty because it is filled with clarity, with vastness, indeed, with light, as is the perfection of wisdom:

> The perfection of wisdom gives light, O Lord.
> I pay homage to the perfection of wisdom.
> She is worthy of homage.
> She is unstained, the entire world cannot stain her.
> She is a source of light . . .[30]

The Mahāyāna texts are ambiguous on "*śūnyatā.*" On the one hand, space is an existing nothing and thus the translation, "emptiness," is appropriate. On the other hand, *ākāśa* is the sky, vast, unlimited, and luminous. The translation, "emptiness," misconstrues this happy vision. For Indian Buddhists, the sky is not empty, but open. In the *Prajñāpāramitās*, "*śūnyatā*" means openness and is associated with the highest wisdom, with enlightenment (*bodhi*). Buddhism is apophatic, but it is aiming to negate the negative, not elevate it to a goal. The common translations of "*śūnyatā*" (emptiness, void, *vacuité*, nothingness) miss this root use of the term in the *Rgs* and the *Aṣṭa*.

This sense of *śūnyatā* as spacious and open is closely connected in *Rgs* to the concept of having no place to settle down (*anālaya*) and nothing to grasp (*anāgrahā*):

> The *Dharma* should be attained as nothing to settle in (*anālaya*) and nothing to grasp (*anāgrahā*).[31]

Furthermore, in *Rgs*, *śūnyatā* is not a place to stand on:

> Supported by space is air, and [by that] the mass of water;
> By that again is supported this great earth and the [living] world.
> If the foundation of the enjoyment of the deeds of beings
> Is thus established in space, how can one think of that object?
> Just so the *Bodhisattva*, who is established in *śūnyatā*,
> Manifests manifold and various works to beings in the world,
> And his vows and cognitions are a force which sustains beings.
> But he does not experience the Blessed Rest;
> for *śūnyatā* is not a place to stand on.[32]

In *Rgs*, people who are defiled are like fools who have become "entangled in space."[33] The *bodhisattva* practices (*carati*) perfect wisdom and so is like open space:

> An obstruction of the space element by the firmament
> cannot be found anywhere by anyone.
> Just so the wise *Bodhisattva*, coursing in wisdom,
> like open space, and he courses calmly quiet.[34]

In *Rgs*, the *bodhisattva's* practice of perfect wisdom is a nonpractice because he does not become attached to, does not crave, perfect wisdom:

> In all the qualities of the Disciples and likewise of the
> *Pratyekabuddhas*, the wise *Bodhisattva* becomes trained:
> But he does not stand in them, nor does he long for them.[35]

Again in *Rgs*, the *bodhisattva* does not settle down in any of the four meditations:

> Those of great might who dwell in the four Trances
> Do not make them into a place to settle down in, nor into a home.[36]

This is why the *bodhisattva* in *Rgs* can enter into the world without becoming defiled by it and thereby aid sentient beings.

> Just as those *Bodhisattvas*, bearers of the best qualities,
> Having dwelt in Trance and Concentration, Yogins who have exerted themselves,
> Become again established in the sense-world, unstained
> As the lotus in water, independent of the *dharmas* of the fools.[37]

In *Rgs*, *bodhisattvas* who set out for the foremost enlightenment enter the world like true servants, like mothers, compassionate for all living beings.[38] But they do enter the world. The *bodhisattva* practicing *śūnyatā* is not in a state of vacancy, eyes closed to the world, but active on behalf of others. It is precisely because she is practicing openness that she does not ignore the world or become stained by passion. Again, the model is Gautama who taught for forty years in the world without being stained by it.

In the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, the *bodhisattva* is not stained because she does not grasp wisdom as others would grasp or appropriate ego-defensive or biased interpretations of their own experience of events (*dharmas*). Clinging to wisdom would stain the purity (*viśuddhi*) of wisdom as much as clinging to interpretations of events as if they were precious worldly goods stains experience with passion (*rāga*), aversion *(dveṣa)*, and delusion (*moha*).

> When he does not fulfill perfect wisdom, he cannot go forth to all knowledge, for by what cause does he grasp the ungraspable? For in perfect wisdom, form is not grasped. Just so feeling, perception, disposition and consciousness are not grasped in perfect wisdom. But the nongrasping of form is not form. The same with feeling, perception and disposition. The nongrasping of consciousness is not consciousness. And perfect wisdom also cannot be grasped.[39]

The *bodhisattva* practicing perfect wisdom does not grasp on to the idea that she is practicing perfect wisdom and so the idea of "perfect wisdom" is not found, i.e., does not exist for her. Subhūti, responding to Śāriputra's question as to how a *bodhisattva* should practice if he is to practice perfect wisdom, responds saying:

> The great *bodhisattva* should not practice form, nor practice the sign of form, nor practice the idea "form is a sign," nor practice the arising of form, nor practice the cessation of form nor practice the removal of form, nor practice the idea "form is open," nor practice the idea "I practice," nor practice the idea "I am a *bodhisattva*." This would thus similarly be found neither in perceptions nor in dispositions. Similarly in practicing consciousness, not practicing the sign of consciousness, nor practicing the idea of "the sign of consciousness," nor practicing the arising of consciousness, nor practicing the cessation of consciousness, nor practicing the removal of consciousness, nor practicing the the idea consciousness is open," nor practicing the idea "I practice," nor practicing the idea "I am a *bodhisattva*." And similarly, it would not occur to him "he who practices thus practices perfect wisdom and develops perfect wisdom." Thus practicing, the great *bodhisattva* practices perfect wisdom. Indeed, there is no idea of this; "As he practices, thus he becomes," nor the idea "I practice," nor the idea "I do not practice," nor the idea "I practice and do not practice," nor the idea "I neither practice nor do not practice," nor the idea "I will practice," nor the idea "I will not practice," nor the idea "I will and will not practice." What is the cause of that? To let such ideas arise would be to then grant attention to all the events that have already passed. By name, the *samādhi* of the great *bodhisattva* is delighted by not clinging to any events, it is extraordinary, absorbed in infinitude, very happy, surpassing [the *samādhi* of] the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*. When the great *bodhisattva* dwells in this *samādhi*, as evidenced by the great *Tathāgatas*, he is to be awakened as a perfectly enlightened one, a *buddha*.
>
> The Elder Subhūti said, concerning the way of experiencing of a *buddha*, elucidating this way of the noble, great *bodhisattva* as compared with previous *tathāgatas* and *arhants:* He who dwells in this *samādhi*, dwells in perfect enlightenment, in supreme and highest enlightenment. When he dwells in this *samādhi*, he does not review it nor think "I am collected," "I will enter *samādhi*," I am entering *samādhi*,' "I have entered *samādhi*." All of that, in each and every way, is not found (i.e. does not exist).[40]

Deluded people, on the other hand, grasp *dharmas*, become attached to them, to their perceptions, dispositions, to their own interpretations of reality, just as they become attached to worldly goods which are, by

nature, impermanent. Since *dharmas* are open and nongraspable, since they cannot be gotten ahold of (*aparigṛhīta*), their reality and attactment to their reality are constructions of an ignorant, deluded mind:

> The Lord says to Śāriputra; As they [*dharmas*] are not found, so they are found though they do not exist. [Since they do not exist, finding them] is called ignorance. Foolish, untaught common people are attached to them. Although they do not exist, they have constructed all events. Having constructed them, they cling to those events they extract and invent, but they do not prosper. They do not find or construct them out of any events.[41]

Nāgārjuna makes the same point in the *MK:*

> Hence the ignorant compose dispositions, the roots of *saṃsāra*. Therefore, the ignorant create, while the wise, seeing reality, do not.
>
> Since the destruction of dispositions is the cessation of ignorance, the cessation of ignorance comes from practice based on knowledge [of *pratītya samutpāda*, the twelvefold chain of interdependent arising].[42]

That is, the *bodhisattva* works in the everyday world but, unlike the untrained person, he does not create fiction. Further, the *bodhisattva* uses language, but does not settle down in words and concepts, is not attached to them.

> "*Buddha*" is a mere word. "*Bodhisattva*" is a mere word. "Perfect wisdom" are mere words. They denote what is completely extinct. It is the same as with the word "self" to denote the self, and we recognize the self as completely extinct.[43]

In early Buddhism, attachment to a concept of self (*ātman*) through ignorance of the fact that no self exists gives rise to suffering. *Ātman* is a word that has no referent in the world. In the *Aṣṭa,* attachment to concepts, such as "*bodhisattva*," is also ignorance. However, the point is that while such words can be used coherently, indeed have referents in an ordinary sense, the one practicing wisdom, the *bodhisattva,* cannot settle down in the concept "*bodhisattva*" without losing the practice of wisdom. The map is not the territory. Further, words and

concepts include in their everyday meanings attachment and grasping. The word "*bodhisattva*" connotes a being of higher achievement than an *arhant* to a Mahāyānist, but not to a Theravāda Buddhist. To not settle down in a term is to use it neutrally, without grasping, without attachment. But language is such that to use it without attachment, without settling down, is a stupendous task because the *bodhisattva* must practice in the everyday world, using language, but without greed, without settling down in words. The model is the skillful means employed by Gautama in teaching the *dharma* to students of varying capacities for understanding, even using the term "*ātman*" if that would liberate a student. There was not meant to be attachment to specific doctrine in the early texts. Indeed, the teachings are seen as a raft which once on the other shore (enlightenment) should be left behind rather than carried overland.

It is in this sense of attachment to descriptions that the world is an illusion, a magic show, a mirage. Grasping and attachment are ignorant because they ignore the true nature of beings, which is impermanent in early Buddhism, *śūnya* in the Mahāyāna. To perceive the world with grasping, with attachment, is to perceive a world that does not exist, that is constructed, not real, a phantasm, a creation of the mind. The *Aṣṭa* is not claiming that a real world does not exist. It does claim that attachment to it defiles perception. To perceive the world without settling down, without attachment, is to perceive *tathatā* (suchness), *dharmatā* (reality, beings as they naturally are), *dharmadhātu*, (space, the sphere of the teachings, the universe), *bhūtakoṭi* (the limit of reality, i.e. *nirvāṇa*), *śūnyatā* (openness), and *viśuddhi* (purity). These terms are synonymous.

To become attached to even these names is to lose the practice of perfect wisdom:

> Bhagavan; Well said, Subhūti. For names and signs are sources of attachment.
> Subhūti; It is an attachment if one perceives that form is open (*śūnya*) . . .
> Bhagavan; . . . so many signs, so many attachments. What is the cause? From signs comes attachment . . . The nature of events is not past, nor future, nor present; it lies outside the three periods of time and for that reason, it cannot possibly be converted, cannot be treated as a sign, or as an objective support, and it cannot be seen, nor heard, nor felt, nor known.[44]

Subhūti; Deep is the nature of events.
Bhagavan: . . . because of having clarity.
Subhūti; Deep is the nature of perfect wisdom.
Bhagavan; . . . because of having purity. Deep is the nature of perfect wisdom because of the nature of clarity.[45]
Subhūti; The nature of clarity is the perfection of wisdom. I pay homage, O Venerable One, to the perfection of wisdom.
Bhagavan; Also the nature of all events is clarity. And the nature of clarity is the perfection of wisdom. What is the cause of this? So it is [realized] by the perfectly enlightened *tathāgata* and the completely awakened *arhant* that all events are unmade.
Subhūti; Then because of that are all events not realized by the perfectly enlightened *tathāgata* and *arhant*?
Bhagavān; It is just because of their nature that events are not something. Their nature is no-nature and their no-nature is their nature because all events have not two marks but one mark only, no mark. So because of this, all events are not realized [i.e., made real] by the perfectly enlightened *tathāgata* and *arhant*. What is the cause of this? There are not two natures of events, just one is the nature of events. And the nature of events is no-nature and no-nature is the nature of events. It is thus that all the limits of attachment are gotten rid of.
Subhūti; Deep, Venerable One, is the perfection of wisdom.
Bhagavan; Through a depth like that of space . . .
Subhūti; . . . The development of wisdom is like the development of space. Homage should be made to those great *bodhisattvas* who are armed with this armour. What is the reason for this? They want to be armed with space when they put on armour for the sake of beings. A *bodhisattva* is armed with the great armour, a great *bodhisattva* is a hero when he wants to be armed with this armour and win perfect and complete enlightenment for the sake of liberating beings who are like space, for the sake of lifting up beings who are like space. The great *bodhisattva* has won the armour of the perfection of vigor, is armed with the armour for the sake of beings who are like space, who are like the realm of the truth. [46]

That is, it is the nature of events to not have a nature just as space does not have a nature. The *bodhisattva* cannot settle down in events or descriptions of events any more than he can settle down in space. Events, like space, are open-ended, lacking essence (*niḥsvabhāva*), which is to say, their nature or essence is to not have a nature or essence. Settling down in an event or description is to become attached to it, to reify it by assigning an essence or nature to it and thus "to have become entangled in space." Since events and descriptions have no nature, settling down in them ignores the fact that there is nothing definitive about them, no fixed and unchangeable description that will

fix them through time. There is nothing to hold on to. In Conze's translation, they "offer no basis for apprehension."[47]

> Bhagavan: Perfect wisdom is perfectly pure because, like space or an echo, it does not express anything, it is inarticulate, undefined, uttered in vain.[48]

In the *Aṣṭa,* even enlightenment is compared to space. Indeed, it does not occur to space that it will win full enlightenment and thus it is hard to win:

> Bhagavan said to long-lived Subhūti: Perfect enlightenment is hard to win because it is no longer existing. Right and best enlightenment is hard to win because it is absent. Full and perfect enlightenment is hard to win because it cannot be discriminated. Full enlightenment is hard to win because it has not been fixed (made or created, fabricated). Perfect, complete and full enlightenment is supremely hard to win.
>
> Then Śāriputra said to Subhūti: The path to perfect enlightenment is hard to win because it is open [*śūnya*], O Subhūti. Perfect, complete and full enlightenment is supremely hard to win. What is the cause of that? The vow 'I will realize full and perfect enlightenment' does not occur to space. In just the same way should events be known [as *niḥsvabhāva,* without own being, without essence or nature]. What is the reason for this? All events are the same as space.[49]

The term "*śūnyatā*" in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* is used to point to this lack of essence or nature in events (*dharma*). Events have no *svabhāva* (own-being, essence), no defining mark or characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) by which they can be fixed or defined. The nature of events is no nature. Events are open (*śūnya*). In the *Aṣṭa,* the *skandhas* are also open, lacking own-being:

> Bhagavan said to Subhūti: The perfect wisdom of the *tathāgatas* sees "the five *skāndhas* as the world" because "they do not crumble nor crumble away." What is the cause of this? Do we see "they do not crumble nor crumble away?" The five *skandhas* have *śūnyatā* for own-being and lacking own-being, *śūnyatā* cannot crumble nor crumble away. The perfection of wisdom is the guide for *tathāgatas'* and *arhants'* complete and perfect enlightenment of the world. What is signless or wishless, or uneffected, or unproduced, or nonexistent, or the realm of the teachings does not crumble nor crumble away. Just so, Subhūti, does the

> perfection of wisdom guide *tathāgatas'* and *arhants'* full and complete enlightenment of the world.[50]

Śūnyatā cannot crumble away because it is like space. And defining characteristics or marks of events also lack support, in the *Aṣṭa,* because they are like space:

> The marks are here left aside as signless and wishless, O sons of the gods, as "unaccumulated," "non-arising," "non-ceasing," as "not defiled," as "not purified," as "not existing," as "extinct," "the realm of the teachings," and "suchness." So, sons of the gods, the marks are here left aside. What is the cause of this? Indeed O sons of the gods, these marks are unattached. These marks, O sons of the gods, are like space.[51]

Ākāśa, the sky or space, transcends, is above and beyond, the physical world. Yet the sky is still part of the ordinary, everyday world of human experience. In the *Aṣṭa, ākāśa* exists by being open, clear, spacious, expansive, luminous, etc. Thus when *dharmas* (events), *skandhas* (skeins or strands of personality), and *lakṣaṇas* (marks) are described as like space, as *tathatā* (suchness), *apraṇihita* (wishless), etc., the metaphor for these terms is the sky, a transcendent, borderless, unfixed aspect of the experienced world. The sky is not indescribable, but the description is of what is boundless, as opposed to what is bounded or fixed. Finally, the point is that even events which seem to have fixed characteristics or marks, such as a person, are really like space, really unbounded and unfixed.

If these terms are taken as pointing to a real transcendent but indescribable world, then the teachings meant to liberate beings from attachment to the world create a new world, a new source of attachment, a new object of greed and craving (*tṛṣṇā*). To become attached to *śūnyatā*, *tathatā*, etc. is as much in error as grasping, as settling down in any other concept. The *Aṣṭa* instructs on the danger of reifying or hypostatizing any concept, even if central to Buddhism:

> Then Venerable Subhūti gathered himself and said this to Bhagavan; How should a great *bodhisattva* nobly practice perfect wisdom in order to intensively cultivate openness or how should he attain concentration on *śūnyatā* [openness]?
> Bhagavan said; In this case Subhūti, the great *bodhisattva* practices perfect wisdom by reflecting on "form is open" and so on with feeling, perception and disposition, by reflecting on

"consciousness is open." He thoroughly considers, without frustration, and attends continuously so as to attain intellectual mastery, yet because "form" is naturally open, he would not consider openness the nature [of form]. And without considering the nature of openness, they do not realize the goal [i.e. unless *bodhisattvas* realize that openness has no nature, they do not realize the goal].[52]

The same point is made by Nāgārjuna in the *MK*:

The Conquerer taught openness as the refutation of all views.
But hose who hold openness as a view are called irremediable.[53]

This same point is made more emphatically in a later work regarded as an appendix to the *MK*, the *Vigrahavyavartinī* (*V*). Here Nāgārjuna asserts that the word "*śūnyatā*" is not a name that refers to an eternal verity:

He who would designate a truly existing name to an intrinsically existing being could be refuted by you.
But we do not designate a name for an eternal existent.[54]

Nāgārjuna claims in the *MK* that the term "*śūnyatā*" does not refer to anything but is only used provisionally:

I am not saying the "*śūnya*" could exist or "*aśūnya*" could exist, or both or neither.
They are said only for the purpose of teaching.[55]

Nāgārjuna further argues in the *MK* that misunderstanding the purpose of using the term "*śūnyatā*" by taking it to refer to some ultimate reality is as dangerous as grasping a snake by the head. It would be to take teachings meant to liberate as an object of craving and thus they would become a source of suffering:

Śūnyatā wrongly conceived destroys the dimly-witted.
It is like a snake grasped by the head or a garbled incantation.[56]

Nāgārjuna is thus in accord with the *śūnyatā* tradition of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, namely that it is a term that is not properly understood if reified. Even *śūnyatā* is *śūnya*, (even openness is open). For the purposes of our discussion, the main difference

between Nāgārjuna's works and the *Aṣṭa* is that the former claims that space both exists and does not exist whereas Nāgārjuna argues that it neither exists nor does not exist. Both, however, take space as the root metaphor for *śūnyatā*. And since the term "space" (*ākāśa*) in the *Aṣṭa* means sky (*div*, *ākāśa*), the term "*śūnyatā*" is founded upon a sky metaphor and is, at least in the *Aṣṭa*, better translated by the positive term "openness" than by the negative term "emptiness." Further, Nāgārjuna's indebtedness to the *Aṣṭa* lends support to the notion that his usage of the term "*śūnyatā*" may be closer to the *Aṣṭa* than to other works, especially nonBuddhist works, in which the term has a decidedly negative ring.

One final Mahāyāna *sūtra* that may have exerted an influence on Nāgārjuna is, surprizingly, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (*Laṅkā*), associated with the Yogācāra or Vijñānavāda school and usually considered antithetical to the Madhyamaka. The *Laṅkā* was composed about 300 C.E., after the *MK*, but probably not in Śri Laṅkā for which it was named.[57] The case for this proposition was made by Christian Lindtner who argued that Nāgārjuna quotes an early, probably oral version of the *Laṅkā* five times in the *MK*, twice in the *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, and thrice in the *Catuḥstava*.[58] It is clear that the *Laṅkā* was composed over several centuries and that early versions were in close accord with the Madhyamaka position.[59] The comparisons between the *Laṅkā* and the *MK*, in the original Sanskrit for the sake of comparison, as well as in translation, are as follows:

1. *Laṅkā* II, 143

sarvabhāvo 'svabhāvo hi sadvacanaṃ tathāpyasat/
śūūnyatāśūnyatārthaṃ vā bālo 'paśyan vidhāvati//[60]

There is no inherent nature in any being, consequently, there is no true verbal description.
Thus inexperienced fools separate the use of *śūnyatā* from *śūnyatā*.

MK XXIV, 7

atra brūmaḥ śūnyatāyāṃ na tvaṃ vetsi prayojanam/
śūnyatāṃ śūnyatārthaṃ ca tata evaṃ vihanyase//[61]

> We reply that here you have not experienced the purpose in *śūnyatā* and so the use of *śūnyatā* is split from *śūnyatā*.

In his comments on these two passages, Lindtner suggested that both are concerned about the use or application of *śūnyatā*. He translates the "*śūnyatāśūnyatārtham*" compound as "speaking about emptiness with empty statements" which is a cogent, thought perhaps overly liberal rendering, in contrast to the translation given above. Lindtner further observed that both passages are directed against fools, the *Laṅkā* passage against fools in general whereas the *MK* passage against "You, a fool . . ." Finally, Lindtner noted that the *Laṅkā* passage is simply a statement, whereas the *MK* passage is systematic, meaning philosophically systematic. The similarities between the two passages are remarkable, not only in the use of the compound mentioned above, but in the similar meanings of the verbs "*vi-dhā*" and "*vi-han*" as well as "*paś*" and "*vid*." The second comparison is:

2. *Laṅkā* II, N 99

> *. . . punar aparaṃ, Mahāmate, śrāvakapratyekabuddhānāṃ nirvāṇāṃ svasāmānyalakṣaṇāvabodhād asaṃsargato viṣayāviparyāsadarśanād vikalpo na pravartate . . .*[62]

> But certainly, Mahāmati, the *nirvāṇa* of *śrāvakas* and *pratyeka buddhas* is self-calming which is a sign of perfect enlightenment, achieved alone from a sphere uncorrupted by doubt or views, nor do false discriminations come forth.

Laṅkā X, 488

> *śrāvakānāṃ kṣayajñānaṃ buddhānāṃ janmasaṃbhavam/*
> *pratyekajinaputrāṇām asaṃkleśāt pravartate//*[63]

> When the source of birth of *buddhas* and *śrāvakas* ceases to be born,
> Without defilement, the sons of conquering *pratyekas* come forth.

MK XVIII, 12

> *saṃbuddhānām anutpāde śrāvakāṇāṃ punaḥ kṣaye/*
> *jñānaṃ pratyekabuddhānām asaṃsargāt pravartate//*[64]

> When accomplished *buddhas* do not arise and *śravakas* cease to be,
> With independent knowledge, *pratyeka buddhas* come forth.

Although the *Laṅkā* II passage quoted first is not as close as the other two, all three mention *śrāvakas* and *pratyeka buddhas* in the genitive, employ the verb "*pra-vṛt*" in the passive and convey the independence of *pratyekabuddhas*. The *Laṅkā* X and *MK* XVIII passages are extraordinarily close philologically and philosophically, lending further credence to Lindtner's claim the the *MK* quotes an early version of the *Laṅkā*. The third comparison is:

3. *Laṅkā* II, N 99

. . . punar, Mahāmate, mahāparinirvāṇaṃ na nāśo na maraṇam/
yadi punar Mahāmate, mahāparinirvāṇaṃ maraṇaṃ syāt punar api janmaprabandhaḥ syāt/
atha vināśaḥ syāt saṃskṛtalakṣaṇapatitaṃ syāt/
ata etasmāt kāraṇān, Mahāmate, mahāparinirvāṇaṃ na nāśaṃ na maraṇaṃ cyutivigataṃ maraṇam adhigacchanti yoginaḥ/
punar aparaṃ Mahāmate mahāparinirvāṇam prahīnāsaṃprāptito 'nucchedāśāśvatato naikārthato nānārthato nirvāṇam ity ucyate/[65]

Again, Mahāmati, *mahāparinirvāṇa* is neither destruction nor death. And if, Mahāmati, *parinirvāṇa* were death, then there would be birth and continuation. Hence there would be destruction of what would have continued from the characteristics of conditioning. Hence, for these reasons, Mahāmati, *yogi*s attain the spiritual goal, *parinirvāṇa*, which is neither destruction, death, nor passing away into death. For certainly Mahāmati, *mahāparinirvāṇa* is called "wishless" (i.e., not desiring attainment), not attained, not destroyed and not permanent, not the same and not different.

MK XXV, 3-5

aprahīnam asamprāptam anucchinnam aśāsvatam/
aniruddham anutpannam etan nirvāṇam ucyate//
bhāvas tāvan na nirvāṇaṃ jarāmaraṇalakṣaṇam/
prasajyetāsti bhāvo hi na jarāmaraṇaṃ vinā//
bhāvaś ca yadi nirvāṇaṃ nirvāṇaṃ saṃskṛtaṃ bhavet/
nāsaṃskṛto hi vidyate bhāvaḥ kvacana kaścana//[66]

Nirvāṇa is called wishless, unattained, not destroyed,
and not permanent, not ceasing, and not arising.
First off, *nirvāṇa* is not an existent, characterized by old age, and death.
Indeed, there is no existent without old age and death.
And if *nirvāṇa* is an existent, *nirvāṇa* would be conditioned.
But indeed, not one unconditioned existent is found anywhere.

In reference to the above, Lindtner commented that the *MK* is not original, but is first and last based on *āgama* and that it refers to the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. Lindtner said the *Laṅkā nirvāṇa* passages were especially well known to Nāgārjuna. Thus for an understanding of troublesome terms, he suggested scholars look not to the Pāli, but to the *Laṅkā*. He also noted that the terms "*naikārthato nānārthato*" used in *Laṅkā* II and missing from *MK* XXV are supplied by "*anekārtham anānārtham*" in *MK* XVIII, 11, as is "*mṛta.*"[67]

It could be counterargued that it is more plausible to say that both texts are quoting *āgama* rather than the *MK* is quoting the *Laṅkā*, because both texts use the passive form of *vac* ("*ucyate,*" "*nirvāṇa* is called or said to be . . ."). However, Lindtner argued that Nāgārjuna's use of earlier forms of language, such as "*vidyate*" and "*evam*" show that he is basing himself on *āgama*, specifically the *Laṅkā*. But the argument is not convincing in that the term '*evam*' is used in the *Aṣṭa* (see note 41) as is the term "*saṃvidyate*" (see note 42). Thus Nāgārjuna's employment of earlier forms of Sanskrit could have derived directly from the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* which is known to predate the *MK*.

However, Lindtner still has a strong case as regards the *Laṅkā nirvāṇa* passages, which he held are from the early, probably oral, recension of the *Laṅkā*. The only two lengthy descriptions of *nirvāṇa* in the *Aṣṭa*, both quoted previously, are decidedly not as close to the *MK* as are the descriptions from the *Laṅkā*. The *Aṣṭa*'s Chapter XII [R 273] describes *nirvāṇa* as *animittam* (signless), *apraṇihita* (wishless), *anabhisaṃskāra* (unaccumulated), *anutpāda* (not arising), *anirodha* (not ceasing), *asamkleśa* (not defiled), *avyavadānam* (not purified), *abhāva* (not existing), *nirvāṇa* (extinct), *dharmadhātu* (realm of the teachings), *tathatā* (suchness), and *aniśrita* (unattached). *Aṣṭa* Chapter XVIII [R 342] is almost identical, describing as synonymous *śūnyatā* (openness), *animitta* (signless), *apraṇihita* (wishless), *anabhisaṃskāra* (uneffected), *anutpāda* (unproduced), *ajaterabhāva* (nonexistence and no birth), *virāga* (dispassion), *nirodha* (cessation), *nirvāṇa,* and *vigama* (departing). By contrast, the *Laṅkā* and *MK* terms for *nirvāṇa* are identical, as shown above.

Lindtner argued that the *Laṅkā* is at a pre-*yukti* (reasoning or argumentation) stage containing no rationality or exegesis, and thus an

early oral version of the *Laṅkā* must have preceeded the systematic philosophical treatise of the same theme, the *MK*. However, current dating puts the written *Laṅkā* (c. 300 C.E.) later than the *MK* (c. 150-250 C.E.). Thus while Lindtner's suggestion is intriguing, the most plausible explanation for similarity is that the *Laṅkā* is quoting, in an unsystematic way, the *MK*. But it is also possible that the *MK* is later than has been supposed.

On Lindtner's reasoning that the pre-*yukti* stage must predate the exegetical stage, the seven types of *śūnyatā* defined in the *Laṅkā* would seem to follow rather than precede the *MK* in which the concept of *śūnyatā* is general.[68] However, if Lindtner's argument is sound that the *nirvāṇa* passages comprise the early, probably oral, recension of the *Laṅkā*, then those *nirvāṇa* passages that also discuss *śūnyatā* may shed light on Nāgārjuna's use of the term. One such passage immediately follows the seven types of *śūnyatā*:

advyalakṣaṇaṃ punar mahāmate katmat? yadutacchāyātapavad dīrgharhrasvakṛṣṇaśuklavan mahāmate dvyaprabhāvitā na pṛthakpṛthak/
evaṃ saṃsāranirvāṇavan mahāmate sarvadharmā advayāḥ/
na yatra mahāmate nirvāṇaṃ tatra saṃsāraḥ/
na ca yathā saṃsāras tatra nirvāṇam, vilakṣaṇahetusadbhāvāt/
tenocyate advyā saṃsāraparinirvāṇavat sarvadharma iti/
tasmāt tarhi mahāmate śūnyatānutpādādvyaniḥsvabhāvalakṣaṇe yogaḥ karaṇīyaḥ//

atha khalu bhagavānstasyām velāyāmime gāthe abhāṣat-
deśomi śūnyatāṃ nityaṃ śāśvatocchedavarjitām/
saṃsāraṃ svapnamāyāsvyaṃ na ca karma vinaśyati//135

ākāśam atha nirvāṇaṃ nirodhaṃ dvyam eva ca/
bālāḥ kalpentyakṛtakān āryā nāstyastivarjitān//136[69]

Again Mahāmati, what is the mark of nonduality? Namely just as light or shade, long or short, black and white appear as two, they are not separate one from another. Like all events, *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are not two.
There is no *nirvāṇa* except where there is *saṃsāra*.
And there is no *saṃsāra* except where there is *nirvāṇa*, for existence is without distinctive mark or cause.
It is said "all events are not two like *saṃsāra* and *parinirvāṇa*."
Then from that, Mahāmati, duty and discipline are marked by *śūnyatā*, nonarising, nonduality, and lack of own-being.

Then at that time, Bhagavan recited this couplet of verses:

I teach *śūnyatā* which abandons permanence, eternalism, and nihilism.
And *karma* does not destroy *saṃsāra*, our own illusory dream.

Moreover, the two, *nirvāṇa* and *nirodha*, are like space.
Fools imagine and create, while the noble abandon existence and nonexistence.

Thus the *Laṅkā* also likens *nirvāṇa* to space. The *MK* also uses the image of light and darkness in the *nirvāṇa* chapter which later argues for the nondifferentiation of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. However, the two passages use different terms (*Laṅkā*; "*chāyā*" and "*tapas*," *MK*; "*āloka*" and "*tamas*"). Further, Nāgārjuna's point is not that light and darkness are nondual, but that they are two, they are mutually exclusive. The image is not of dawn and dusk, when both light and darkness prevail, but rather where there is a lamp, there is no darkness. Supposing Lindtner's thesis, Nāgārjuna would here be arguing against an early recension of the *Laṅkā*.

bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇam ubhayaṃ katham/
na tayor ekatrāstitvam ālokatamasor yathā//[70]

How could *nirvāṇa* be both an existent and a nonexistent?
Both cannot exist at one and the same place, as with darkness and light.

Significantly, the terms "*advaya*" and "*advaita*," (not two, nondual) are never used by Nāgārjuna in any of his works, though the term "*advaya*" is found in the *Aṣṭa*. Like the *Laṅkā* passage (and the Pāli Canon), the *MK* uses "*nirvāṇa*" and "*nirodha*" synonymously, but uses different language on their nondifference from *saṃsāra*. Whereas the *Laṅkā* asserts that *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* are not two or nondual, Nāgārjuna argues that they are not distinct. It is a logical move that asserts a relation of equivalence (which is not monism) rather than a relation of nonduality.

na saṃsārasya nirvāṇāt kiṃcid asti viśeṣanaṃ/
na nirvāṇasya saṃsārāt kiṃcid asti viśeṣanaṃ//

nirvāṇasya ca yā kotiḥ saṃsāranasya ca/
na tayor antaraṃ kiṃcit susūkṣmam api vidyate//[71]

There is no distinction whatever between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.
There is no distinction whatever between *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra*.

The limit of *nirvāṇa* is that of *saṃsāra*.
The subtlest difference is not found between the two.

Thus Nāgārjuna was influenced by the contribution par excellence of the Mahāyāna, that *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* are not different, in contrast to the Pāli Canon, but he did not adopt the philosophy of nondualism expounded in both the *Aṣṭa* and the *Laṅkā*. The philosophy of nondualism maintains that two things may be distinguished, but that fundamentally they are unified. The position maintained by Nāgārjuna is considerably stronger, that two events cannot be distinguished one from another. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

The remaining two comparisons made by Lindtner are:

4. *Laṅkā* X, 279

kleśāḥ karmapathā dehaḥ kartāraś ca phalaṃ ca vai/
marīcisvapnasaṃkāśā gandharvanagaropamāḥ//[72]

Defilements and the paths of action, the body, doers, and the effect
are like imaginary cities in the sky resembling dreams and mirages.

MK XVII, 33

kleśāḥ karmāṇi dehāś ca kartāraś ca phalāni ca/
gandharvanagarākārā marīcisvapnasaṃnibhāḥ//[73]

Defilements, actions, bodies, doers and effects are like
dreams and mirages, made up imaginary cities in the sky.

Lindtner noted on this comparison that the *Laṅkā* passage is in *sūtra* style (*vai*) and that all the first-line terms in the *MK* passage are in the plural. Once again, the philological and philosophical resemblance is too remarkable to have occurred by chance. Whereas the Yogācāra later leaned in the direction of idealism and maintained the existence of mind-only (*citta mātra*), this position was never argued by Nāgārjuna.[74] The Mādhyamikas are said to have ignored questions concerning the source of dreams, mirages and imaginary cities in the sky. Robinson attributes the rise of the Yogācāra to this neglect:

> The Śūnyavādins were not concerned with the phenomenology of mind, but in asserting that all phenomena are *māyā* [illusion], cinematic fictions, and dreamlike, they accorded the mind a major role in creating the seeming world. Conventional things, they said, are not purely objective entities but concepts or discriminations constructed by the mind under the limitations of ignorance. This raises several questions that the Śūnyavādins did not answer. What, in worldly scientific terms, is the process by which the mind creates and objectifies fictions? What is the real nature of error? If the sense consciousnesses arise and perish moment by moment following their evanescent objects, which of them imagines the objects, and how is the process of world construction passed on from moment to moment? How do memories take place? And what is it that experiences the absolute truth free from discriminations?[75]

Robinson suggests "the attempt to answer these questions gave rise to a new school called Yogācāra . . ." and thus it arose by a kind of logical necessity. While it is true to say the Mādhyamikas did not answer these questions, neither did they ignore them. Rather such questions were dismissed for philosophical and soteriological reasons. The Madhyamaka effort concerned the radical purification of mental fictions rather than an explanation of error. In discussing early Buddhist views of error; from *bījas* (seeds), via the *saṃtāna* (process) of *citta* (thought/mind) come *phala* (fruits, effects), and Mahāyāna explanations of error; *karman* (actions) are *avipraṇāśa* (not perishable, continuing through their fruits), thus giving rise to *phala*, Nāgārjuna argues that *karman* does not arise in the first place because it is without nature or essence. If it did, it would be unchanging and thus could not come into being. And since it does not have a nature and is thus uncharacterizable, how could it cause a particular event?

Further, since actions neither arise depending on conditions nor independently of conditions, there is no actor. If there is no actor, why talk of action and the fruits of action? It is as if, Nāgārjuna argues, a teacher were to create a magical form and that form were to create another form. In the same way, the actor has created himself and that creation creates actions and effects. He concludes with the verse above, all of these events are fictions.[76] In the following chapter of the *MK*, Nāgārjuna says all *prapañca* (conceptual play) is dissolved in *śūnyatā*, and he employs the term "*cittagocara*," substantialized in Yogācāra as "the realm of the Mind," possibly the *MK* meaning, but rendered here as "the range of thought":

Where the range of thought is renounced, that which can be stated has ceased to be valid.
Indeed, the nature of events is like *nirvāṇa*, nonarising and nonceasing.[77]

Four and five verses later, Nāgārjuna concludes this chapter with the quotations given in first and fourth comparisons above, already demonstrated to be similar to passages in the *Laṅkā*. Thus Nāgārjuna did not ignore *citta* (mind or thought) as the source of error. The point, for the Mādhyamikas, is not to understand the source of error, but to eliminate it. Nāgārjuna upholds the usual Buddhist formula in *Ratnāvalī* I, 20, error arises from greed, hatred, and ignorance.[78]

Lindtner's fifth comparison between the *Laṅkā* and the *MK* is:

5. *Laṅkā* X, 37

sambhavaṃ vibhavaṃ caiva mohāt paśyanti bāliśāḥ/
na saṃbhavaṃ na vibhavaṃ prajñāyukto vipaśyati//[79]

Fools see just origination and disappearance out of delusion.
One intent upon wisdom rightly sees neither origination nor disappearance.

MK XXI, 11

dṛśyate saṃbhavaś caiva vibhavaś caiva te bhavet/
dṛśyate saṃbhavaś caiva mohād vibhava eva ca//[80]

As origination and disappearance is seen by you, so it could exist.
Exactly so is origination and disappearance seen out of delusion.

On this comparison, Lindtner pointed out the terse and reverse order of the *MK* verse. Like the first comparison above, Lindtner pointed out that the *MK* verse is directed against "You, a fool . . ." whereas the *Laṅkā* verse is directed against fools in general. He maintained that the *Laṅkā* was not directed against the *Abhidharma*, but against heretics who entertain positions about *nirvāṇa*. He maintained the *Abhidharma* was irrelevant on *nirvāṇa* and suggested therefore that scholars refer to historical background rather than commentaries. Finally Lindtner recommended that that certain terms used by Nāgārjuna, such as "*vikalpa*," "*cittagocara*," "*vibhava*" and "*prasajyate*" would be better understood in reference to their use in the *Laṅkā*.

Lindtner's evidence of quotation is overwhelmingly convincing. But his argument that the direction of influence was from an early, probably oral, recension of the *Laṅkā* to the later *MK* is not established. If, as is most likely, the earlier date for Nāgārjuna is correct, then the *Laṅkā* is quoting the *MK*. However, the possibility that the *MK* may be later than supposed has still not been completely ruled out. And it is also possible that the *MK* and the *Laṅkā* were written at about the same time and thus exerted mutual influence. Further, we should not neglect the *Sagāthakam* (Chapter X) verses of the *Laṅkā* that describe, or predict according to Suzuki, the appearance of a certain Nāgāhvaya (weaver/power/youth of serpents), who is possibly Nāgārjuna (clear/silver/gold/lightning/only son of serpents or possibly of the city):

> In the southern region of Vedalī, [there is/will be] a renowned venerable *bhikṣu*. He [is/will be] named Nāgāhvaya, destroyer of one-sidedness concerning being and nonbeing. Declaring a middle way, the southern Mahāyāna, to the world, abiding in a place of joy causes him to strive for that land of happiness.[81]

In any case, it is clear there are even greater similarities between the Madhyamaka (logic) and Yogācāra (meditation) schools than has previously been thought. Lindtner maintained that the Yogācāra was not a school early on and that the *trikāya* (three-body) doctrine associated with it is part of a common Mahāyāna heritage. It was argued above that the doctrine emerged naturally from the early Buddhist traditions.

Finally, Professor Nagao argues that while the Yogācāra inherited the Madhyamaka concept of *śūnyatā*, they altered it by starting from *abhūtaparikalpa* (unreal imagination), which they maintain exists, as opposed to *pratītya samutpāda* (interdependent origination). Nagao takes *śūnyatā* to be a negation (nonbeing) and quotes the Yogācāra *Madhyāntavibhāga* I, 1-2 which "dared to define *śūnyatā* as the 'nonexistence of the duality and the existence of that nonexistence.'"[82] The duality, of course, is that between existence and nonexistence. Nāgārjuna argues, as quoted above, that *śūnyatā* does not "exist" and does not "not exist." Thus it is clear that while there is extraordinary similarity between Madhyamaka and Yogācāra, interesting differences remain.

Notes

1. Edward Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*, Oxford, Bruno Cassirer Ltd., 1967, 125.

2. Andrew Rawlinson, "The Position of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* in the Development of the Early Mahāyāna," ed. Lewis Lancaster, *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems Studies in Honor of Edward Conze*, Berkeley, California, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1977, 18.

3. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 356.

4. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 358. I owe the translation of *pratyeka buddha* to Ninian Smart.

5. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 358-59.

6. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 359 and 363.

7. *MK* XXII, 16.

8. Richard Robinson and Willard Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion*, 109.

9. *MK* XXIV, 18, and *MK* XXII, 11.

10. Edward Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*, 141.

11. Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and its Verse Summary*, x, and Akira Yuyama, "The First Two Chapters of the *Prajñā-pāramitā-ratna-guṇasaṃcaya-gāthā* (Rgs)" in ed. Lewis Lancaster, *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems*, 203.

12. Edward Conze, *Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, ix-x.

13. Edward Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*, 144. At the beginning of all manuscripts of the *Aṣṭa* is the *Prajñāpāramitāstuti*, i.e., *stotra*, supposedly composed by Nāgārjuna, ed. P. L. Vaidya, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts no. 4, Darbhanga, The Mithila Institute, 1960, 1. This text is regarded by Lindtner as decidedly spurious, *Nagarjuniana*, 11-12n14

14. Edward Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*, 132.

15. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 363.

16. Akira Yuyama, "The First Two Chapters of *Prajnā-pāramitā-ratna-guṇa-saṃcaya-gāthā (Rgs)*" in ed. Lewis Lancaster, *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems*, indicates by underlining that the term "*asti*" in Indic Recension A, based on the Calcutta mss. and Tibetan Recension A, a previously unknown Tibetan version from Tun-huang, is different from the term used in Recension B, Indic and Tibetan, edited by Obermiller, Moscow-Leningrad 1937 repro., The Hague, 1960, Osnabrück 1970 which is based on a Chinese blockprint, 203-9. Text: //

rūpaṃ na prajña iti rūpi na asti prajñā
na ca eti prajña iti tesa na asti prajñā
ākāśa-dhātu-sama tasya na cāsti bhedah// 9
ārambanāna prakṛtī sa an-anta-pārā
sattvāna yā ca prakṛtī sa an-anta-pārā/

ākāśa-dhātu-prakṛtī sa an-anta-pārā
prajñāpi loka-vidunām sa an-anta-pārā// 10
Edward Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and its Verse Summary*, 14, translates "*prakriti*" as "the essential original nature" which is excessively metaphysical. Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. II, 356, reads "by nature" for "*prakṛta*" (Pāli *pakata*) and "matter, occurance, circumstance, story" for "*prakṛti*" (Pāli - "*pakati*").

17. Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and its Verse Summary*, Ch. VII, 3, 23.

18. Edward Conze, trans. *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, Ch. II, 3, p.13. Text from Yuyama, "The First Two Chapters of *Prajñāpāramitā-ratna-guṇa-saṃcaya-gāthā* (Rgs)" in Lancaster, ed., *Prajñāpāramitā and Related systems*, 203. Text: II
yatha nāyako 'sthitaku dhātu a-saṃskṛtāyā
tatha saṃskṛtāye a-thito a-niketa-cārī/
evam ca sthānu-a-thito sthita bodhisattvo
a-sthānu sthānu ayu sthānu jinena ukto// 3

19. Edward Conze, trans., *Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, Ch. XXVII, 8-9, 60. Note that space is like an ether which supports the flight of the bird.

20. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. XVIII, [R 342], 270, and trans. Edward Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, XVIII, 1, 209. Text: *Subhūtir āha; ata eva bhagavān bodhisattvāsya mahāsattvāsya gambhīrāṇi sthānāni prajñāpāramitā pratisaṃyuktāni sūcayitavyāni/ evam ukte bhagavān āyuṣmantam subhūtim etad avocat; . . . gambhīram iti subhūte śūnyatāyā etad adhīvacanam/animittasya apraṇihitasya anabhisaṃskārasya anutpādasya ajāter abhāvasya virāgasya nirodhasya nirvāṇasya vigamasyaitat subhūte adhivacanaṃ yaduta gambhīram iti//*

21. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. VIII, [R 193], 96. Text: *subhūtir āha; gambhīrā bhagavan prajñāpāramitā/ bhagavān āha; ākāśa gambhīratayā subhūte gambhīrā prajñāpāramitā/*

22. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. XXVIII, [R 347], 272. Also trans. Edward Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, p. 211. Text: *Subhūtir āha; kasya punar bhagavan etad adhivacanam aprameyam iti? Bhagavān āha; śūnyatāyāḥ subhūte etad adhivacanam aprameyam iti/ animittasyāitad adhivacanam/ apraṇihitasya subhūte etad adhivacanam aprameyam iti//*

23. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, XIII, [R 280-81], 139. Text: [*Bhagavān āha; Tathagatā-dharma]*
ākāśasamāsaṃkhyeyāprameyatayā asamasamā asaṃkhyeyā aprameyā ete dharmāḥ/
ākāśātulyatayā atulyā asamavahitā bateme dharmāh/
tasmāt subhūte atulyā ete dharmā ucyante/
ākāśācintyatayā acintyā ete dharmāh/
ākāśātulyatayā atulyā ete dharmāh/
ākāśāprameyatayā aprameyā ete dharmāḥ/
ākāśāsaṃkhyeyatayā asamkhyeyā ete dharmāḥ/

ākāśāsamasamatayā asamasamā ete dharmāḥ/

24. Andrew G. Van Melsen, *From Atomos to Atom: The History of the Concept ATOM*, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1952, 19 and Rex Warner, *The Greek Philosophers*, New York, Mentor Books, 1958, 45-6.

25. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. IX, [R 205], 102. Compare trans. Edward Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, 151 which reads the first line as "This is a perfection of what is not, because space is not something that is." The double negative is not in the P. L. Vaidya edition.Text:

evam ukte āyusmān subhūtir bhagavantam etad avocat;
asatpāramiteyaṃ bhagavan ākāśasattāmupādāya/
asamasamatāpāramiteyaṃ bhagavan sarvadharmānupalabdhitām
upādāya/ viviktapāramiteyaṃ bhagavan atyantaśūnyatām upādāya/

26. Andrew G. Van Melsen, *From Atomos to Atom*, 94 and 96.

27. *MK* V, 7 and 8.

28. David L. Snellgrove, "Buddhism in North India and the Western Himalayas" in ed. Deborah E. Klimberg-Salter, *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path*, Los Angeles, UCLA Art Council, 1982, 71.

29. Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, *Rgs* XXVII 5, 59.

30. Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, *Aṣṭa* VII, 1, 135.

31. Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, *Rgs* XV, 8, 37.

32. Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, *Rgs* XX, 5 and 6, 45.

33. Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, *Rgs* XXII, 5, 51.

34. Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, *Rgs* XXVI, 4, 57. A better translation for "*carati*" is "practices." "*Coursing*" is not English.

35. Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, *Rgs* XXV, 6, 56.

36. Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, *Rgs* XXIX, 1, 63.

37. Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, *Rgs* XXIX, 5, 63.

38. Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, *Rgs* XXIX, 8 and 13, 64.

39. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. I [R 9], 5. Text: *aparipūrayamāṇaḥ prajñāpāramitāṃ na niryāsyati sarvajñatāyām aparigṛhītaṃ parigṛhṇan/ tatkasya hetoḥ? rūpaṃ hy aparigṛhītaṃ prajñāpāramitāyām/ evaṃ vedanā saṃjñā saṃskārāḥ/ vijñānaṃ hy aparigṛhītaṃ prajñāpāramitāyām/ yaśca rūpasyāparigrahaḥ, na tadrūpam/ evaṃ yo vedanāyāḥ saṃjñāyāḥ saṃskārāṇām/ yo vijñānasya aparigrahaḥ, na tadvijñānam/ sāpi prajñāpāramitā aparigṛhītā/ evaṃ hyatra bodhisattvena mahāsattvena prajñāpāramitayaṃ caritavyam/*

40. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. I, [R 13], 7. Compare trans. Edward Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight*

Thousand Lines, 86–87. Text: *sacedāyuṣman sāriputra bodhisattvo mahāsattvo na rūpe carati, na rūpanimitte carati, na rūpaṃ nimittam iti carati, na rūpasyotpāde carati, na rūpasya nirodhe carati, na rūpasya vināśe carati, na rūpaṃ śūnyām iti carati, nāhaṃ carāmīti carati, nāhaṃ bodhisattva iti carati/ evam sacenna vidanāyāṃ na saṃjñāyāṃ na saṃskāreṣu/ sacenna vijñāne carati, na vijñānanimitte carati, na vijñānaṃ nimittam iti carati, na vijñānasyotpāde carati, na vijñānasya nirodhe carati, na vijñānasya vināśe carati, na vijñānaṃ śūnyam iti carati, nāham carāmīti carati, nāham bodhisattva iti carati/ sacetpunar nāsyaivaṃ bhavati, ya evaṃ carati, sa prajñāpāramitāyāṃ carati, sa prajñāpāramitāṃ bhāvayatīti/ evaṃ caran bodhisattvo ahāsattvaścarati prajñāpāramitāyām/ sa hy caraṃścarāmīti nopaiti, na carāmīti nopaiti, carāmi ca na carāmi ceti nopaiti, nāiva carāmi na na carāmīti nopaiti, cariṣyāmīti nopaiti, na cariṣyāmīti nopāiti, cariṣyāmi ca na cariṣyāmi ceti nopaiti, naiva cariṣyāmi na cariṣyāmīti nopaiti/ tatkasya hetor nopaiti? sarvadharmā hy anupagatā anupāttāḥ/ ayam ucyate sarvadharmānupādāno nāma samādhir bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya, vipulaḥ puraskṛto 'pramāṇaniyato 'sadhāraṇaḥ sarvaśrāvakapratyekabuddhaiḥ/ anenaiva samādhinā viharan bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ śripramanuttarām samyaksaṃbodhim abhisaṃbuddhyate// buddhānubhāvena āyuṣmān subhūtiḥ sthavira evam āha vyākṛto 'yaṃ bhagavan bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ pūrvakāis tathāgatāir arhadbhiḥ samyaksaṃbuddhair anuttarāyaṃ samyaksaṃbhodhau, yo 'nena samādhinā viharati/ sa tam api samādhi na samanupaśyati, na ca tena samādhinā manyate, ahaṃ samādhitaḥ, ahaṃ samādhi samāpatsye, ahaṃ samādhi samāpadye, ahaṃ samādhisamāpatraḥ, iti, evaṃ tasya sarveṇa sarvaṃ sarvathā sarva na saṃvidyate//*

41. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. I [R 15], 8. Compare trans. Edward Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, 87. Text: *yathā śāriputra na saṃvidyante, tathā saṃvidyante evam avidhyamānāḥ/ tenocyante avidhyeti/ tān bālapṛthagjanā aśrutavanto 'bhiniviṣṭāḥ/ tair saṃvidhyamānāḥ sarvadharmāḥ kapṛtitāḥ/ te tān kapṛtayitvā dūyorantayoḥ saktāḥ tān dharmān na jānanti na puśyanti/ tasmāt te 'saṃvidhyamānān sarvadharmān kapṛtayanti/*

42. *MK* XXVI 10 and 11.

43. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. I [R 26], 13. Text: *buddha iti bhagavan nāmadheyamātrametat/ bodhisattva iti bhagavan-nāmadheyamātrametat/ prajñāpāramiteti bhagavan-nāmadheyamātram etat/ tacca nāmadheyamanabhinirvṛttam/ yathātmā ātmeti ca bhagavann ucyate, atyantatayā ca bhagavannan abhinirvṛtta ātmā/*

44. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. VIII, [R 190–91] 94-5. Text: *bhagavan; sadhu, sadhu subhūti/ evam etat subhūti, evam etat/ tatkasya hetoḥ? nāmato 'pi hi subhūti saṅgo nimittato 'pi saṅgaḥ/ Subhūti; rūpamāyuṣman śāriputra śūnyam iti saṅgaḥ/ bhagavan; . . . yāvanti khalu punaḥ subhūte nimittāni, tāvantaḥ saṅgāḥ/ tatkasya heto? nimittato hi subhūte saṅgaḥ/ . . . . yā khalu punaḥ subhūte*

dharmāṇāṃ dharmatā, na sā atītā vā anāgatā vā pratyutpannā vā/ yā nātītā nānāgatā na pratyutpannā, sātryadhvanirmuktā/ yā tryadhvanirmuktā, na sā śākyā pariṇāmayituṃ na nimittīkartuṃ nārambaṇīkartum/ nāpi sā tṛṣṭaśrutamatavijñātā//

45. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *AΩ†asåhasrikå Prajñåpåramitå*, Ch. VIII, [R 192] 95. Text: *subhūtir āha; gambhīrā bhagavan prakṛtir dharmāṇām/ bhagavān āha; viviktatvāt subhūte/ āha; prakṛtigambhīrā bhagavan prajñāpāramitā/ bhagavān āha; prakṛti viśuddhatvātsubhūte/ prakṛtiviviktatvāt-prakṛtigambhīrā/ prajñāpāramitā/*

46. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. VIII, [R 193] 96, Text: *subhūtir āha; prakṛtiviviktā bhagavan prajñāpāramitā/ namaskaromi bhagavan prajñāpāramitāyai// bhagavān āha; sarvadharmā api subhūte prakṛtiviviktāḥ/ ya ca subhūte sarvadharmāṇāṃ prakṛtiviviktā, sā prajñāpāramitā/ tatkasya hetoḥ? tathā hi subhūte akṛtāḥ sarvadharmās tathāgatenārhatā samyaksaṃbuddhenābhisaṃbuddhāḥ/ subhūtir āha; tasmāt tarhi bhagavan sarvadharmā anabhisaṃbuddhās-tathāgatenārhatā samyaksambuddhena? bhagavān āha; tathā hi subhūte prakṛtyaiva na te dharmāḥ kiṃcit/ yā ca prakṛtiḥ, sā aprakṛtiḥ, yā ca prakṛtiḥ, sā prakṛtiḥ sarvadharmāṇām-ekalakṣaṇatvāt yaduta alakṣaṇatvāt/ tasymāt tarhi subhūte sarvadharmā anabhisambuddhās tathāgatenārhatā samyak-sambuddhena/ tatkasya hetoḥ? na hi subhūte dve dharmaprakṛtī/ ekaiva hi subhūte sarvadharmāṇāṃ prakṛtihḥ/ yā ca subhūte sarvaādharmāṇāṃ prakṛtiḥ, sā aprakṛtiḥ, yā ca aprakṛtiḥ, sā prakṛtiḥ/ evam etāḥ subhūte sarvāḥ saṅgakoṭyo vivarjitā bhavanti// subhūtir āha; gambhīrā bhagavan prajñāpāramitā/ bhagavān āha; . . . ākāśagambhīratayā subhūte gambhīrā prajñāpāramitā/* and [R 197] 97–98. Text: *subhūtir āha; . . . ākāśabhāvanaiṣā bhagavan yaduta prajñāpāramitābhāvanā/ namaskṛtavyāsto bhagavan bodhisattvā mahāsattvāḥ, yair ayaṃ saṃnāhaḥ saṃnaddhaḥ/ tatkasya hetoḥ? ākāśena sārdhaṃ sa bhagavan saṃnaddhukāmo yaḥ satvānāṃ kṛtaśaṃ saṃnāhaṃ badhnāti/ mahāsaṃnāhasaṃnaddho bhagavan bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ/ śūro bhagavan bodhisattvo mahāsattvo ya ākāśasamānāṃ sattvānāṃ dharmadhātusamānāṃ sattvānāṃ kṛtaśāḥ saṃnāhaṃ saṃnaddhukāmo 'nuttaraṃ samyaksambodhim abhisaṃboddhukāmaḥ/ ākāśaṃ sa bhagavan parimocayitukāmaḥ/ ākāśaṃ sa bhagavan utkṣeptukāmaḥ/ mahāvīryapāramitāsaṃnāhaprāptaḥ sa bhagavan bodhisattvo mahāsattvo ya ākāśasamānāṃ dharmadhātusamānāṃ sattvānāṃ kṛtaśaḥ saṃnāhaṃ saṃnahyate//*

47. Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, Ch. IX, 1, 149.

48. P. L. Vaidya ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. IX, [R 202] 100. Text: *ākāśapratiśrutkāvacanīyapravyāhāranirūpalepatayā subhūte ariśuddhā prajñāpāramitā/* Compare Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, 146.

49. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. XVI, [R 315], 157. Text: *evam ukte bhagavān āyuṣmantaṃ subhūtim etad avocat; asaṃbhavatvātsubhūte durabhisaṃbhavā anuttarā samyaksambodhiḥ/ asaddhūtatvāt-subhūte durabhisaṃbhavā anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhiḥ/ avikalpatatvāt subhūte durabhisaṃbhavā anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhiḥ/ avithapitvāt subhūte durabhisaṃbhavā anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhiḥ/ paramadurabhisaṃbhavā anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhir abhisaṃboddhum// atha khalvāyuṣmān śāriputra āyuṣmantaṃ subhūtim etad avocat; śūnyam ityanenāpy āyuṣman subhūte paryāyeṇa durabhisaṃbhavā anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhiḥ/ paramadurabhisaṃbhavā anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhir abhisaṃboddhum/ tatkasya hetoḥ? na hyāyuṣman subhūte ākāśasyaivaṃ bhavati aham anuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisaṃbhotsye iti/ evaṃ ca āyuṣman subhūte ime dharmā abhisaṃboddhvyāḥ/ tatkasya hetoḥ? ākāśasamā hyāyuṣman subhūte sarvadharmaḥ/* Compare Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, 197.

50. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. XII, [R 256], 126. Text: *evam ukte bhagavān āyuṣmantaṃ subhūtim etad avocat; na lujyante na pralujyante iti subhūte pañca skandhā loka iti tathāgatānāṃ prajñāpāramitayā darśitaḥ/ tatkasya hetoḥ? na lujyante na pralujyante iti darśitāh? śūnyatāsvabhāvā hi subhūte pañca skandhāḥ, asvabhāvatvāt/ na ca subhūte śūnyatā lujyante vā pralujyate vā evam iyaṃ subhūte prajñāpāramitā tathāgatānām arhataṃ samyaksaṃbuddhānām asya lokasya saṃdarśayitrī/ na ca subhūte ānimittaṃ cāpraṇihitaṃ vā anabhisaṃskāro vā anutpādo vā abhāvo vā dharmadhātur vā lujyate vā pralujyate vā/ evam iyam subhūte prajñāpāramitā tathāgatānām arhata samyaksaṃbuddhānām asya lokasya saṃdarśāyitrī//*

51. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. XII, [R 273], 165. Text: *ānimittamiti apraṇihitamiti devaputrā atra lakṣaṇāni sthāpyante anabhisaṃskāra iti anutpāda iti anirodha iti asaṃkleśa iti avyavadānam iti abhāva iti nirvāṇam iti dharmadhātur iti tathateti devaputrā atra lakṣaṇāni sthāpyante/ tatkasya hetoḥ? aniśritāni hi devaputrā etāni lakṣaṇāni/ ākāśasadṛśāni hi devaputrā etāni lakṣaṇāni/*

52. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Ch. XX [R 370] 183. Text: *atha khalvāyuṣmān subhūtir bhagavantam etad avocat; prajñāpāramitāyāṃ bhagavaṃś caratā bodhisattvena mahāsattvena kathaṃ śūnyatāyāṃ parijayaḥ kartavyaḥ, kathaṃ vā śūnyatāsamādhiḥ samāpattavyah? bhagavān āha; iha subhūte bodhisattvena mahāsattvena prajñāpāramitāyāṃ caratā rūpaṃ śūnyam iti pratyavekṣitavyam/ evaṃ vedanā saṃjñā saṃskārāḥ/ vijñānaṃ śūnyam iti pratyavekṣitavyam/ tathā ca pratyavekṣitavyam avikṣiptayā cittasaṃtatyā yathā pratyavekṣamāṇo rūpam iti tāṃ dharmatāṃ dharmatayā na samanupaśyet/ tāṃ ca asamanupaśyan dharmatāṃ* na sākṣāt *kuryād bhūtakoṭim/*

53. *MK* XIII, 8.

54. *Vigrahavyavartinī* 57 in Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 84. Text: *yaḥ sadbhūtaṃ nāmātra brūyāt sasvabhāva ity evam/*
bhavatā prativaktavyo nāma brūmaś ca na vayaṃ sat//

55. *K* XXII, 11.

56. *MK* XXIV, 11.
57. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 433.
58. Christian Lindtner, "The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* in Early Madhyamaka Literature," oral presentation to The Eight Conference of The International Association of Buddhist Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, August 8-11, 1987.
59. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 400 and 433.
60. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtram*, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts, No. 3, Darbhanga, The Mithala Institute, 1963, Ch. II, 143 [N 88], 37. Lindtner cited this passage as number 145 and so does trans. Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra: A Mahāyāna Text*, London, Routledge, Kegan Paul Ltd., 1932, 77.
61. *MK* XXIV, 7.
62. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtram*, Ch. II [N 99] 42, trans. D. T. Suzuki, *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, 87, consulted here but not quoted. Lindtner cites this passage as *Laṅkā* II, 99, 1.14 which refers to another text. The number 99 corresponds to [N 99] in Vaidya.
63. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtram*, Ch. X [N 326] 239, trans. D. T. Suzuki, *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, "*Sagathakam*," 261, again consulted, but not quoted.
64. *MK* XVIII, 12.
65. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtram*, Ch. II [N 99] 41, trans. D. T. Suzuki, The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, Ch. II, 87, again consulted but not quoted.
66. *MK* XXV, 3-5.
67. *MK* XVIII, 11:

> *anekārtham anānārtham anucchedam aśāśvatam/*
> *etattallokanāthānāṃ buddhānāṃ śāsanāmṛtam//*

68. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtram*, Ch. II [N 74–75], 31–32, trans. D. T. Suzuki, *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, 65–66. The seven kinds are *lakṣaṇaśūnyatā* (emptiness of marks), *bhāvasvabhāvaśūnyatā* (self-nature), *apracaritaśūnyatā* (of nonpractice), *pracaritaśūnyatā* (of practice), *sarvadharmanirabhilāpyaśūnyatā* (all events as inexpressible), *paramārthāryajñānamahāśūnyatā* (great emptiness/openness from knowledge of higher noble truth) and *itaretaraśūnyatā* (miscellaneous emptiness, the least important).
69. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtram*, Ch. II [N 76] 32–33, trans. D. T. Suzuki, The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, 67–68.
70. *MK* XXV, 14.
71. *MK* XXV, 19 and 20.
72. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtram*, Ch. X, 279, "*Sagāthakam*" [N 301] 125, trans. D. T. Suzuki, The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, Ch. X, 249.
73. *MK* XVII, 33. The term "*ākārā*" here functions in much the same way as "*upamāḥ*" *Laṅkā* X, 279 (cited above). The compound *gandharva-nagarākārāḥ* also occurs *at XXIII.8.*
74. D. T. Suzuki, trans., *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, xxii.
75. Robinson and Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion*, 92–93.
76. *MK* XVII.

77. *MK* XVIII, 7. Text:
nivṛttam abhidhātavyaṃ nivṛtte cittagocare/
anutpannāniruddhā hi nirvāṇam iva dharmatā//

78. Jeffrey Hopkins and Lati Rinpoche, trans., *The Precious Garland [Ratnāvalī] and Song of the Four Mindfulnesses*, New York, Harper & Row, 1975, 20.

79. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtram*, Ch. X, 37, "*Sagāthakam*" [N 269], 109, trans. D. T. Suzuki, *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, 229.

80. *MK* XXI, 11.

81. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtram*, [N 286] 128, trans. D. T. Suzuki, *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, 239–40, cited by Kenneth K. Inada, *Nāgārjuna: A Translation of his Mūlamadhyamakakārikā with an Introductory Essay*, Tokyo, Hokuseido Press, 1970, 1. Text:
dakṣiṇāpathavedalyāṃ bhikṣuḥ śrīmān mahāyaśāḥ/
nāgāhvayaḥ sa nāmnā tu sadasatpakṣadārakaḥ//165
prakāśya loke madyānaṃ mahāyānam anuttaram/
āsādya bhūmiṃ muditāṃ yāsyate 'sau sukhāvatīm//166

82. Gadjin M. Nagao, "From Mādhyamika to Yogācāra: An Analysis of *MMK*, XXIV.18 and *MV*, I. 1-2," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 2, No. 1, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1979, 29–43.

Chapter Three: The Philosophy of Nāgārjuna

The preceeding chapters have broadly traced Pāli and Mahāyāna influences on Nāgārjuna and have suggested that he was no iconoclast, but a faithful, though rigorous, follower of the Buddhist tradition, particularly the Mahāyāna. Generally his aim was to reaffirm the Middle Way as originally taught by Gautama. Generally his debate was with *Abhidharma* and later commentarial traditions of the classical eighteen Early Buddhist schools.

Nevertheless, it cannot be asserted that Nāgārjuna was wholly in accord with the early *sūtra* tradition. Where the early tradition viewed *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* as opposites, Nāgārjuna argued for their equivalence. And where the early tradition viewed *pratītya samutpāda* (codependent or interdependent origination) and *śūnyatā* as opposites, Nāgārjuna argued for their equivalence. On the matter of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, he followed the *sūtra* tradition of the Mahāyāna. On the meaning of *śūnyatā*, he was inspired by the Mahāyāna *sūtras*, especially the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. But on the equivalence of *pratītya samutpāda* and *śūnyatā*, Nāgārjuna was original and his argument made a respected and influential contribution to the Buddhist tradition. Even here, however, his aim was to bring out the logical consistency inherent, but not always expressed, in the early teachings.

Nāgārjuna was able to weave a philosophically consistent system from the conflicting threads of the Pāli *sūtra* and *Abdhidharma*

traditions and the early Mahāyana *sūtras* by equating *śūnyatā* and *pratītya samutpāda* and by adopting a distinction made in the *Tripiṭaka* between two truths (*nītartha* and *neyartha*, Pāli *nītattha* and *neyyattha*). Codependent or interdependent origination was posited as conventionally true and *śūnyatā* became the higher truth.

The concepts *pratītya samutpāda* and *śūnyatā* (*paṭicca samuppāda* and *suññatā* in the Pāli) are central in the works of Nāgārjuna. He defines the former by the latter in the *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā*:

> Codependent origination (*pratītya samutpāda*) is called *śūnyatā* by us.
> It (*śūnyatā*) makes use of convention and is the practice of the middle way.[1]

Equating "*śūnyatā*" and "*pratītya samutpāda*" is a dramatic departure from earlier usage in the Pāli Canon. *Suññatā* has a psychological meaning in the *Majjhima Nikāya* as the state of great people:

> When the Venerable Sāriputta was seated on one side, the Master said this: "The complexion is clear and pure, so the senses give insights to you. In which state, Sāriputta, do you now dwell much?"
> "Sir, I now dwell much in the state of *suññatā*."
> "Well said, well said, Sāriputta. You surely now dwell much, Sāriputta, with great people. For this, Sāriputta, is the state of great people, namely *suññatā*."[2]

Rune Johansson translates "*suññatāvihāren*" as a "state of emptiness" and explains it, in reference to other Pāli texts, as an "emptiness of consciousness" attainable through meditation. In the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Sāriputta imputs his clear complexion, etc. to having established the four states of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*).[3] Johansson points to an even more direct connection between *nibbāna* (Pāli for *nirvāṇa*, extinction) and *suññatā* in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*: A question concerning the path leading to the unconditioned, i.e. *nibbāna*, is answered, "the concentration that is empty, the concentration that is signless and wishless."[4]

Another passage in the *Majjhima Nikāya* also associates *suññatā* with what Johansson calls a psychological state of meditation. In this instance, Gotama says:

> Indeed, Ānanda, the Tathāgata has completely understood this state, namely how to attain and stay in the inward *suññatā* by leaving all signs unnoticed.[5]

Suññatā is used, in all three quotations, to describe a psychological state attainable through meditation. Johansson notes that of the eight levels of meditation (*jhāna*) described in the *Dīgha Nikāya* and elsewhere, the seventh is *ākiñcaññāyatana*, the realm of nothingness, entered when the monk is thinking; "*n'atthi kiñci*," "nothing exists."[6] Thus his translation of "*suññatā*" as "emptiness," the standard modern translation, is appropriate.

Johansson also cites passages in which *suññatā* is used to describe not only the means to the goal, meditation, but also the end, *nibbāna*. Citing the *Therīgāthā* (*Psalms of the Sisters*), he says:

> When the arahant Uttamā calls herself "*suññatassānimittassa lābhinī*," "winner of the emptiness and signless," she is certainly not referring to the highest level of meditation but to *nibbāna*.[7]

Johansson quotes a passage in the *Majjhima Nikāya* to show that the levels of meditation are progressing levels of emptiness:

> A monk starts to meditate in a forest, and then he sees only forest, no village and no people; "for he regards it as empty of that which is not there."[8]

Again, the translation is apt as the forest is empty of people because they are absent. The passage goes on to describe the monk passing through the eighth level of meditation, attaining a concentration of mind that is signless (*animittaṃ cetosamādhiṃ*) but also made up (*abhisankhato*) and intentional (*abhisañcetayito*) and thus impermanent (*anicca*). Understanding this, the monk is freed from the obsessions (*āsava*) of sensuality (*kāmāsava*), becoming (*bhavāsava*) and ignorance

(*avijjāsava*). There follows, in Johansson's words, the "*arahant*-formula":

> He understands: This conscious state is empty of the obsession of sensuality. He understands this conscious state is empty of the obsession of becoming. He understands this conscious state is empty of the obsession of ignorance. There is only this that is not empty, namely the six sensory fields that, conditioned by life, are grounded on this body itself.[9]

Interestingly, the above term "*paṭicca*" (conditioned), though not the entire phrase *paṭicca samuppāda*, is used only in connection with what is not empty, *asuññatā*. Nāgārjuna's assertion that what is conditioned (in conjunction with other events) is *śūnyatā* is a departure from canonical Pāli *sutta* usage.

Johansson's final reference is to the *Sutta Nipāta* in which *nibbāna* is defined as *viññaṇassa nirodho*, the cessation of consciousness, a necessity because rebirth is effected through consciousness and *nibbāna* is the cessation of rebirth. The stream of conscious processes ceases because it is emptied by meditation and possibly also by insight or wisdom (*paññā*, Skt. *prajñā*). Johansson explains this by drawing a distinction between surface and background, suggesting concentration practices empty surface distractions in consciousness, but also help form a background experience of "security, peace, timelessness, 'emptiness,' which is the 'stopped' *viññaṇa* [that] does not prevent correct perception and clear thinking on the surface." He concludes:

> There are two types of emptiness, one emptiness of surface consciousness which is attained by means of concentration, and one emptiness of *citta* which consists of the constant freedom from the obsessions and includes also the "stopping" of *viññāṇa* the second type is *nibbāna* or one aspect of it.[10]

In all of these passages, the term "*suññatā*" can be defined as the purification of mind resulting from successful meditation practice, from a beginning level of emptying of the mind of what is not present to a final level of emptying the mind of obsessions. *Suññatā* is, like many technical terms in the Pāli Canon, one of the negative descriptions of a

favorable or positive state, *nibbāna*, and it is well translated by the term "emptiness." Finally, in the early *suttas*, i.e., in the discourses of Gautama, the conceptions of *suññatā* and *nibbāna* stand in utter contrast and opposition to that of *paṭicca samuppāda*, the human condition, or *saṃsāra*.

Paṭicca samuppāda (interdependent origination) is presented in the early *Tripiṭakas* as insight into Truth (*Dhamma*) that occurred to Gautama during the third watch the night of his enlightenment immediately preceding his release from *saṃsāra*. Gautama, accordingly, saw beings endlessly migrating through a twelvefold chain of cause and effect invariably leading to rebirth and suffering, as follows:

Interdependent Origination — forward—

If ignorance exists, then conditioning arises.
If conditioning exists, then consciousness arises.
If consciousness exists, then mind and body arise.
If mind and body exist, then the six senses arise.
If the six senses exist, then contact arises.
If contact exists, then feeling arises.
If feeling exists, then craving arises.
If craving exists, then clinging arises.
If clinging exists, then becoming arises.
If becoming exists, then birth arises.
If birth exists, then decay and death arise, together with sorrow, lamentation, physical and mental suffering, and tribulations.
Thus arises the entire mass of suffering.

reverse—

If ignorance is eradicated and completely ceases, then conditioning ceases.
If conditioning ceases, then consciousness ceases.
If consciousness ceases, then mind and body cease.
If mind and body cease, then the six sense cease.
If the six senses cease, then contact ceases.
If contact ceases, then feeling ceases.
If feeling ceases, then craving ceases.
If craving ceases, then clinging ceases.
If clinging ceases, then becoming ceases.
If becoming ceases, then birth ceases.

> If birth ceases, then decay and death cease, together with sorrow, lamentation, physical and mental suffering, and tribulations.
> Thus ceases this entire mass of suffering.[11]

The formula summarizes the human condition, showing that conditioning arises from ignorance and craving and leads inevitably to suffering. Conversely, the cure depends on the cessation of ignorance, i.e., knowledge. Breaking a link (*nidāna*) somewhere along the chain (different places are used by different meditation techniques) is the cessation, *nirodha*, of the entire chain because each link is dependent on the others. The elimination of the chain, *paṭicca samuppāda*, is the elimination of suffering, i.e., *nibbāna*. That is, emptiness, *suññatā*, in any link in the chain is the cessation of the chain or *nibbāna*. In sum, *suññatā* in the Pāli texts means the very opposite of *paṭicca samuppāda*.

That Nāgārjuna defines *pratītya samutpāda*, the conditioning that leads to suffering, as *śūnyatā* (and in what is virtually the same move, equates *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra*) constitutes a terminological sea change that was part of the evolution of the Mahāyāna and the rise of Madhyamaka. The meaning of *suññatā* in the Pāli texts is closer to standard Hindu usage, although for the early Buddhists it was a negative term describing a positive state, while in Hindu texts it is a negative term describing, for the most part, a negative state.[12]

Nāgārjuna, on the other hand, has adopted the more encompassing sense of *śūnyatā* as openness used in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpārimitā* in which it is synonymous with space, the perfection of wisdom, free, having no own-nature, unproduced, unconditioned, boundless, immeasurable, signless, wishless, unthinkable, incomparable, equal to the unequalled, ungraspable, providing no basis for support, etc., in sum, the *summum bonum* of Buddhist practice. He opens his most important work with a *maṅgalam* (dedication) in praise of the Buddha who taught *pratītya samutpāda*, which later is defined, in the quote given above, as *śūnyatā*:

I greet the best of teachers, that Awakened One, who taught
liberation, the quieting of phenomena, interdependent origination
which is
nonceasing and nonarizing, nonmomentary and nonpermanent,
nonidentical and nondifferentiated, not come and not gone.[13]

That is, *pratītya samutpāda* is liberation (*śiva*) and the quieting of phenomena (*prapañcopaśama*) or *śūnyatā*, and this teaching is attributed to Gautama, a not altogether spurious claim to orthodoxy.

The four pairs, *anirodha* (nonceasing) and *anutpāda* (nonarising), *anuccheda* (nonmomentary) and *aśāśvata* (nonpermanent, eternal), *anekārtha* (nonidentity) and *anānārtha* (nondifference), *anagama* (not gone) and *anirgama* (not come) summarize Nāgārjuna's reiterated argument that events in the twelvefold chain of interdependent origination exist in relation to each other and therefore cannot be coherently defined outside of that relation. To separate either relata, such as cessation or origination, and define it independently of the relation is to assign it a kind of independent or essential existence which inevitably results in absurdity, i.e., contradiction (*prasaṅga*), such as death (cessation) without birth (arising):

Dissolution does not exist either with or without origination.
Ortigination does not exist either with or without dissolution.

What will dissolution then be without origination,
death without birth, dissolution without generation? [14]

Arising, etc., cannot exist without cessation, so any event that exists, exists interdependently, exists only if it is open (*śūnya*):

Not any event not interdependently originated occurs.
Indeed, not any event that is not open occurs.[15]

The interdependency of all events is also urged in the *Śūnyatāsaptatikārikā*, a work widely recognized as authentic but extant only in Tibetan. The openness or interdependence (*śūnyatā*) of events is here characterized as indeterminate (*animitta*), a synonym:

Without one [*eka*] there are not many [*aneka*]. Without many [*aneka*] one [*eka*] is not possible. Therefore things that arise dependently [*pratītya samutpāda*] are signless [*animitta*].[16]

Another comparison in the same work is that events in the twelvefold chain exist dependently like father and son and to have a father without a son (or daughter) is impossible.

The father is not the son, the son is not the father. Neither exists without being correlative [*anyonya*]. Nor are they simultaneous [*yugapat*]. The twelve members [*pratītya samutpāda*] likewise.[17]

Lastly from the *Śūnyatāsaptatikārikā*, if one event cannot exist without another, then it cannot even be conceived separately:

Since color [*varṇa*] and shape [*saṃsthāna*] never exist apart [*binna*] they cannot be conceived apart [*binna*], [for] is form [*rūpa*] not [generally] acknowledged to be one [*eka*]? [18]

Interdependency holds true of all events because for one event to even be unique, i.e., identifiable, it must be different from another event and it thereby depends on that other for its difference:

Differences of one event from another depend on [the fact that] one event is not different from another without that other. Which depends on which so that the one from which it differs does not take place?

If one event is different than another from which it differs, it would be without that from which it differs. But that difference does not exist without the one from which it differs and so it does not exist.[19]

Thus no event can exist independently of another since it would depend on there being another from which it could differ. If the event did have independent existence (*svabhāva*), it could not exist in relation (dependent on conditions) and so it could not exist at all. And if *svabhāva* (self-nature) causes another event to arise, that event would be "other-nature" and the original condition would not exist independently or essentially:

> Indeed, no self-nature [own-being, essence] of beings occurs in the conditions of beings.
> Since self-nature is not present, other-nature does not occur.[20]

Nāgārjuna is clear and unambiguous on this point. *Svabhāva* is defined in the *MK* as *nirapekṣa paratra* (independent of others), *ahetu pratyaya* (without cause or conditions), *nitya* (permanent, unchanging), *aparijñāna* (unknowable), and *akriyate* (unmade).[21] *Svabhāva* stands in opposition to *pratītya samutpāda* or *śūnyatā* (interdependence) because it does not depend on anything else. If any event having *svabhāva* exists, it must exist in and of itself as self-caused or uncaused.

But nothing could be self-caused. For example, if suffering were caused by the person suffering, there would be a time when that person was not suffering so that he could later bring suffering about. Who would that person be who has been caused to suffer since he is not suffering? It would have to be another person, in which case, suffering is not self-caused. The same conundrum applies if the suffering is caused by another. If the person is a nonsufferer, who is it that is caused to suffer? Surely a nonsufferer is not suffering.[22] Nor is suffering uncaused. Suffering, says Nāgārjuna, that is not self-caused or caused by another is simply not found (in the *sūtras* or in experience).[23] But the result is the above conundrum.

Such conundrums arise where suffering, etc., is assumed to have *svabhāva*, an independent nature that defines it in distinction to nonsuffering, etc., and makes it real. But suffering, etc., does not exist in and of itself, but depends on causes and conditions (*hetupratyaya*) in the twelvefold chain (*dvādaśaṅga*) of *pratītya samutpāda*. That is, suffering does not truly exist. For example, if youth has *svabhāva*, i.e., if youth really exists as youth and not as something else, then it will never age. But that is impossible. Youth cannot be conceived separated from old age and death. Therefore, youth as youth does not exist.

To summarize, Nāgārjuna uses the term "*śūnyatā*" to mean interdependent origination (*pratītya samutpāda*). Each event in the chain is indeterminate (*animitta*) because it depends on others and so could not exist independently (*svabhāva*). Not only do events not exist outside of relationship as independents, they cannot even be conceived

to exist independently. This is not to say that events cannot be conceived at all. The distinction between two truths, to be discussed shortly, is necessary to establish this point. For now, suffice it to say that events can be conceived in a conventional way, but not as having *svabhāva*. Because events in the twelvefold chain are empty of self-nature, they are open to change, i.e., they are open-ended. Events are not fixed or fixable, but exist in dependence on others. Nāgārjuna is using "*śūnyatā*" as it is used in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* to mean the open-endedness of events, their openness to change, their nonfixedness, their impermanence.

> Causes and conditions, taken together or separately, and certainly not my words, established openness from the nonself-nature of beings.
>
> That dependency of beings is called "openness."
> That dependency is indeed its nonexistence [as self-nature].[24]

Independent or essential existence is denied by Gautama in the *anātman* and *anitya* doctrines. Events lack self (*ātman*) because they are impermanent (*anitya*). The nonexistence of self in the early tradition becomes absence of own, self, or essential nature (*niḥsvabhāva*), i.e., *śūnyatā*, in the later Mahāyāna and Madhyamaka discourse.

Nāgārjuna is meticulously faithful to the teachings of Gautama on the nature of existence (*asti*) and nonexistence (*nāsti*) as well as becoming (*pratītya samutpāda*), which he faithfully recapitulates in Chapter XXVI of the *MK*. But where Gautama called an ethical and soteriological mean between indulgence and asceticism the Middle Way (*madhyama pratipadā*), Nāgārjuna applies the term philosophically to *pratītya samutpāda* (becoming), the mean between being and nonbeing. Nāgārjuna quotes Gautama's instructions to Kātyāyana in the *svabhāva* chapter of the *MK*:

> In the instructions to Kātyāyana, "it is" and "it is not" were demonstrated by the Buddha as causing the appearance of existence and nonexistence.[25]

The same chapter then argues that Buddha taught the avoidance of the extremes of being and nonbeing in favor of change (*anyathābhāva*) or *pratītya samutpāda*:

> If existence would be unalterable, there would not be its nonexistence.
> Indeed a changing nature of primordial substance never happens.
>
> Where primordial substance does not exist, what will have changing nature?
> Where primordial substance exists, what will have changing nature?
>
> "It is" is grasping for eternity. "It is not" is the view of nihilism.
> Therefore, existence and nonexistence would not be resorted to by the wise.
>
> "Whatever exists by self-nature, that is not non-existent" and so is permanent.
> Annihilation follows from "it does not exist now but existed before."[26]

For Nāgārjuna, "*svabhāva*" defines existence (*asti*) or a being (*bhāva*) and "*śūnyatā*" defines becoming (*bhavati*). Thus existence does not exist and what exists is *śūnya*. This is no contradiction, either logically or of the *Buddha Dharma*. For the ordinary copula, Nāgārjuna uses *vidyate* (occurs), *utpapadyate* (happens), *nirvartate* (originates), *pravartate* (sets in motion), but not *bhavati* in the *MK*.

Gautama's rejection of permanent existence (*ātman, svabhāva*) is both philosophical and experiential according to the *Buddhacarita* (*Acts of the Buddha*), the earliest known complete biography of the Buddha composed in the first century, before the time of Nāgārjuna, by the poet Aśvaghoṣa.[27] Based on the *Tripiṭaka* and other sources, it is the only text in the Buddhist corpus that recounts Gautama's study and practice with two *yogis*, probably early Sāṃkhyans, Arāḍa Kālāma and Udraka Rāmaputra, after the Great Going Forth and before the Enlightenment. Chapter XII, 'Visit to Arāḍa,' extant in Sanskrit records Arāḍa's teaching, thorough various steps, to a self extended over space (*ākāśagatam ātmanaṃ*) and finally to insight on nothingness (*saṃpaśyannākiṃcanya*, possibly corrupt for *ākiṃcana*) and liberation that is the supreme Brahman without attribute

(*etattatparaṃ brahman nirliṅgam*). Gautama argues that this method cannot lead to liberation (*śiva*) because the field-knower (*kṣetrajñāsya*, i.e., the *ātman*) is not abandoned:[28]

> This propounded knowledge of subtle to more subtle liberation would lead to nothing beyond the "field-knower," who is not abandoned.[29]

The unabandoned field-knower is a seed that can produce birth:

> Two derivatives from *prakṛti* [primordial matter] are indeed a field-knower and a liberated I.
> I think they have the nature of a seed and the nature of giving birth.[30]

Gautama reasons by analogy that the self, though pure, must become ensnared again because causal conditions continue to exist, just as a seed will grow with the proper conditions:

> For though the self, being indeed pure, should be considered freed, it will become bound due to the continued existence of causal conditions.[31]
>
> Just as a seed does not grow lacking the right season, soil and water, my thought is that it does grow with the right conditions.[32]

Further, argues Gautama, *karma*, ignorance, and craving must continue, at least in a subtle state, as long as the self persists due to ignorance and continuity:

> Liberation should be the abandoning of *karman*, ignorance and cravings and the complete abandoning of continuous existence, but that does not occur where the self exists.[33]
>
> Indeed, conceding a distinction here between what is understood by you, there is conceding to an abiding *ātman* which exists here inside in a subtle state.[34]
>
> It is determined by you from the evils of long life, that liberation is conceding the [continued existence] of hatred and malicious passion in a subtle state of mind.[35]

And as long as the self continues on as one who denies self, it must have attributes:

> Who in this is abandoning the I-maker [ego]? Where the self exists,
> the non-I-maker occurs.[36]
>
> There is no freedom from innumerable activities and these are not
> without attributes.
> Therefore, being without attributes does not exist and one's
> liberation is not explained.[37]

Finally, Gautama reasons by analogy that there is no distinction between attributes and the possessor of attributes:

> Indeed, no lapse occurs between the attributes and the one possessing the attributes, just as fire, as understood by you, is separate from neither the form nor the heat.[38]

It is remarkable, though not surprising, how closely Nāgārjuna's language, examples and method duplicate this record of Gautama's debate with Arāḍa. Both use the terms "*śiva*," "*vidyate*," "*kalpyate*," "*parikalpyate*," and "*upalabhyate*." Both also use the example of fire not being distinct from the heat. And Arāḍa's teaching on achieving liberation and *brahman* without attibutes is defeated, on the whole, by his own assumptions, i.e., the persistence of the *ātman*, and not by the assertion of another view (*dṛṣṭi*). That is, both Aśvaghoṣa and Nāgārjuna use the method of *reductio ad absurdam* (*prasaṅga*) argument, although Gautama concludes with an argument that liberation is the abandoning of everything, including the self. This, however, is less an assertion by Gautama of a view than an analysis of the meaning of the terms "*śiva*" and "*mokṣa*," liberation or freedom. The term "*manye*" ("I think . . .") is used by Aśvaghoṣa to bring out the implications in Arāḍa's own system rather than for the assertion of Buddhism. Gautama is, at this early stage, a student rejecting views on logical grounds and not a teacher propounding them:

> Since further and further abandoning of attributes is prescribed,
> I therefore think total success is fully abandoning all.[39]

Gautama also rejects Udraka's teachings on the same grounds, the continued existence of the *ātman* must be the denial of liberation.

Finally, Gautama's rejection of the *ātman* is based not only on logic, but also on experience, i.e., yogic experience. The *Buddhacarita* recounts that during the third watch on the night of his enlighenment, the Buddha saw with his "divine eye" (*divya cakṣus*) that no *ātman* was present:

> With his divine eyesight he saw that active being [birth] proceeds from the act, not from a Creator or from Nature or from Self without a cause.[40]

Gautama acquired the divine eye during the second watch on the night of his enlightenment and was thereby able to perceive the whole world as it would look without impurity:[41]

> In the second watch he, having no peer, attained the supreme divine eye, the faculty of seeing all the environment.
> Thereupon, with that purified divine eye seeing without obscurity, he saw the world as without impurity.[42]

In other words, Gautama gained an ability to see the whole world without his vision being obscured by passion, aggression, or ignorance. In Buddhist terminology, he could see the world *yathābhūtaṃ* (as it really is). That ability, though unusual, was natural (*dhammatā*) and sensory.[43] He did not see a "pure world," some supersensory vision of perfection, heaven, or utopia. He saw the world as it is, with all its suffering, etc., but without craving any part of it, without hating any part of it and yet without ignoring any part of it.

Gautama's divine eye is not a supernormal eye but an ordinary eye that sees, with all the ordinary rules of perception, an ordinary world. Since his mind is pure, what he sees is not obscured by impurities. Nāgasena observed rather than inferred that there was no chariot apart from the components that make one.[44] In the same way Gautama saw there was no *ātman*. That is experience. He saw without passion, aggression, or ignorance. That is direct experience.[45]

In sum, Gautama rejected the *ātman* doctrine and existence in the abstract, *asti* and *nāsti*, on logical and experiential grounds. And he taught *pratītya samutpāda* (becoming) on the same grounds. Thus

Nāgārjuna's claim to orthodoxy in his rejection of *svabhāva* and his use of *śūnyatā* is well-founded as well as true.

In any case, Nāgārjuna's debate about permanent existence was not with the Sāṃkhyans, as it was for Gautama in the *Buddhacarita*, but with the Theravāda *Abhidharma* interpretation of *dharmas* as real things (*vastu*) or substances (*dravya*) and with the Buddhist equivalent of the Sāṃkhya, the Sarvāstivāda, whose *Abhidharma* interpreted *dharmas* as existing permanently or eternally. They argued the *satkārya* (identity) position, that the effect is in the cause. Nāgārjuna challenged the Sarvāstivāda (Vaibhāṣika) position by adopting their four conditions; the cause, the supporting, immediate (or contiguous), and dominant conditions:

> There are only four conditions, namely *hetu* [cause], *ālambana* [supporting condition], *anantaram* [contiguous condition], and *adhipati* [dominant condition]. There is no fifth condition.[46]

He argues in the next verse that since there is no self-nature (*svabhāva*), i.e., since there is no effect that is identical with its cause (*satkārya*), then there is no other-nature, i.e., there is no effect that is not identical with the cause or external to the cause (*parabhāva*, *asatkārya*).

> Indeed, no self-nature of beings occurs in the conditions of beings.
> Since self-nature is not present, other-nature does not occur.[47]

Thus Nāgārjuna has also challenged the *asatkārya* position that the cause is not in the effect. Kalupahana claims the *asatkārya* position was advocated by the Sautrāntika and interprets the *MK* as a rejection by Nāgārjuna of Sarvāstivāda *satkāryavada* and Sautrāntika *asatkāryavada*.[48] However, Pandeya is convincing that the Sautrāntikas were not *asatkāryavadins*.[49] If his analysis of the Sautrāntika explanation is correct, their view is either closer to the Jain both/and *satkāryāsatkārya* view (the effect is to some extent presupposed in the cause, but is also something new, external) or, as seems more likely, to the Carvaka (Materialist) neither/nor *ahetutva* (uncaused) view that

cause and effect are simultaneous and so there is no causal relation between them, but rather events occur by chance. In deference to Kalupahana's analysis of the *MK*, Nāgārjuna does dismiss the Sautrāntika theory of causal efficacy (*kriyā*) in the verse immediately following his dismissal of the *satkārya* and *asatākārya* views, so it may be that Nāgārjuna thought of the Sautrāntikas as *asatkāryavādins* because *kriyā* (causal efficacy) is the impact of *kṣaṇa* (momentary reality) on the perceiver and so is *para* (other):

> Causal efficacy is not to be associated with condition, causal efficacy is not associated with nonconditions, conditions are not associated with causal efficacy or noncausal efficacy.[50]

In any case, Nāgārjuna dismisses all four views of causality:

> Never, nowhere do any beings occur arisen from themselves,
> from others, from both or from no cause.[51]

Nāgārjuna rejects the *satkārya* view that the effect is identical to the cause as nonsense (*prasaṅga*). An event is supposed to cause or produce itself (*svabhāva*). But if it already exists, it is absurd to speak of it being produced.[52] The distinction between cause and effect dissolves.

> This event that exists is described as without a supporting condition.
> But where an event is without a supporting condition, again, why
> [talk of] a supporting condition?[53]

Further, if the cause and effect are identical, how can what is itself uncaused (permanent, eternal) produce a caused effect (temporal, impermanent)?

> The effect is created by conditions, but the conditions are not
> created by themselves.
> How can an effect created by conditions be from what is not created
> itself?[54]

Nāgārjuna rejects the *asatkārya* view that the effect is not identical with the cause, but grows out of it as something entirely new on similar grounds; how can a cause unlike the effect produce it?

> The effect is not in the conditions either separately or together.
> How could that which is not in the conditions be from the conditions?[55]

Further, if the effect is unlike the cause and is thus external to it or other than it (*parabhāva*), then it can be caused by anything else or even by nothing. There is no intelligible relation between the two and again, the concept of causality dissolves:

> Moreover, if the effect, nonexistent in those [conditions], is set in motion from those conditions,
> why is it not set in motion from no conditions?[56]

The problem with the common sense *satkāryāsatkārya* view that the cause is both like and unlike the effect is compounded for it suffers the criticisms of both views. Again, the conception of causality is incoherent. And if the effect is uncaused and happens only by chance, the concept of causality is irrelevant.

> The effect is created neither from conditions nor from no conditions.
> How can an effect be obtained from nonexistent conditions and no conditions?[57]

Nāgārjuna concludes that the notion of causality is incoherent. And if causality is incoherent, the notion of arising is incoherent.

> Whenever an event that is existent, nonexistent, or both existent and nonexistent does not originate,
> how can a cause that thus brings (events) about be reasonable?[58]

The result is the formula quoted above; "No beings can be said to arise from themselves, from others, from both, or from no cause." It is for this reason Nāgārjuna says beings are nonarising (*anutpāda*). The notion of conditions is also reduced to absurdity (contradiction):

> What arises "depends" on these so-called conditions.
> So long as there is no arising, how are these not nonconditions?[59]

If beings and events do not arise, then they do not cease. For this reason, Nāgārjuna describes beings as nonceasing (*anirodha*).

> When events do not arise, cessation does not happen.
> Hence what condition is suitable for a noncontiguous condition in cessation?[60]

The concept of causality, being incoherent, cannot explain the process of becoming. And it is useless, i.e. irrelevant, as regards being (*asti, sat*) and nonbeing (*nāsti, asat*):

> Neither being nor nonbeing are associated with conditions of usefulness.
> Of what [use] are conditions for nonbeing? And for whom [is there use] in conditions for being?[61]

In other words, that which is eternal cannot have a cause and that which is nonexistent, such as the son of a barren woman, cannot have a cause. Causality was only ever meant to have utility for the process of becoming, *pratītya samutpāda*. However, Nāgārjuna has reduced the concepts of causality and arising to absurdity (*prasaṅga*). He now asserts a statement that, while true given the above arguments, appears to contradict the *pratītya samutpāda* teachings of Gautama which he praised in the *maṅgalam* quoted above:

> Since beings lacking self-nature do not occur as existence per se,
> this [statement] "when this is, that comes to be" does not obtain.[62]

First of all, Nāgārjuna claims that beings lacking *svabhāva* do not exist as *svabhāva*, a reprehensible tautology, to borrow a phrase from Charles Lanman.[63] The second *śloka* (line) merely repeats the obvious, *pratītya samutpāda* (interdependent arising), i.e., "when this is, that comes to be," is irrelevant to *asti* (eternal existence, *svabhāva*) and to what is logically impossible, *nāsti* (nonexistence).

This statement does not deny *pratītya samutpāda* but, to reiterate the conclusion drawn above, does deny that the *nidāna* (links in the twelvefold chain) exist independently (*svabhāva*). Therefore, to interpret Gautama's teachings, if *tṛṣṇā* (thirst, craving) exists, *upādāna* (clinging, grasping) arises, etc., as meaning that *tṛṣṇā* and the other *nidāna* exist per se and independently as *svabhāva* is to deny the real meaning of Gautama's *Dharma* as well as the possibility of treading the path to liberation:

> Where the cause does not exist, neither the antecedent cause nor the act to be done occur.
> Where these do not exist, the activity, the agent and the act to be done do not occur.
>
> Neither [action] in accord with the teaching nor [action] not in accord with the teaching occurs in the existence of activity, etc.
> The effect does not exist in [action] in accord with the teaching nor in [action] not in accord with the teaching, so it does not occur.
>
> Where the effect does not exist, the path goes not to heaven and not to liberation, and the purposelessness of all activities follows.[64]

Thus Nāgārjuna is not rejecting the doctrine of interdependent arising as taught by Gautama. He is rejecting its interpretation by *Abhidharma* masters, especially of the Sarvāstivāda school, who have, in essence, assigned an *ātman* to each *nidāna*, *svabhāva* to each *dharma*.

> But those of inferior insight who see only the existence and nonexistence of beings
> do not see the emancipating cessation of appearances.[65]

Nāgārjuna rejects such interpretations as being contrary to the teachings of the Buddha:

> I do not regard those who assert various differences between the identity of the self and of beings
> know the meaning of the teaching [of the Buddha].[66]

Nāgārjuna's aim is to bring out a philosophically consistent recapitulation of the *Buddha Dharma* by reminding followers of the Middle Way that *tṛṣṇā* and all the other *dharmas* are not to be understood as fixed, determined, real, permanent, eternal, etc., but as *śūnya*, open, lacking self-nature (*niḥsvabhāva*), indeterminate or unfixed (*animitta*), impermanent, etc. It is in this sense, when *nidānas* are hypostatized as having *svabhāva*, that Nāgārjuna calls them *māyā*, illusory:

> As illusion, as dream, as an imaginary city in the sky,
> so have arising, endurance and destruction been illustrated.[67]

Such illusions are given power, by those who assign them a reality they do not possess, to create the whole chain of interdependent origination and thus birth, decay, and death, together with sorrow, lamentation, physical and mental suffering, and tribulations:

> Where "I" and "mine" are internally and externally destroyed,
> grasping has ceased.
> From that destruction birth is destroyed.
>
> Because of the destruction of action and defilement, there is
> liberation.
> There are actions and defilements for one having false notions.
> They must be constructed from false imagining and stopped by
> openness.[68]

This whole process of constructing fictions is like an illusion creating another illusion:

> As a teacher has within him the power to magically create a magical illusion and that magical illusion magically creates another magical illusion . . .
>
> . . .in the same way, an agent is a magical creator and his action a magical illusion. It is as a magical illusion magically created by a magical illusion.
>
> Defilements, actions, bodies, doers and effects are like dreams and mirages, made up imaginary cities in the sky.[69]

Nāgārjuna is not denying the existence of the external world and interpreting the *Buddha Dharma* as some kind of philosophical idealism, but he is denying that a hypostatized description is true of it.

> Physical form, sound, taste, touch, smell, and events are all made up imaginary cities in the sky, like dreams and mirages.[70]

That is, those events that comprise the world of experience do not exist in some permanent state (*asti*) and if they did so exist, they could never be said to not exist (*nāsti*).

> "Whatever exists by self-nature, that does not have nonexistence" and so is eternal.
> Annihilation follows from "it does not exist now but existed before."[71]

To review, existence does not exist, but becoming does occur. Yet any description of becoming rests on a coherent description of causality and arising. These concepts, as shown above, are reduced to absurdity (contradiction) under analysis and so are incoherent. Thus events in the experienced world cannot even be said to arise or cease, be permanent or impermanent, identical or different, to come or go. They are open-ended and indeterminate (*animitta*). But this is not to say that events are indescribable (*avarṇya*) or nonexistent. Events are not nonexistent because *nāsti* is logically impossible, as the son of a barren woman. And, according to Nāgārjuna, events also occur in the only way beings in the world and the *tathāgata* (thus gone, i.e., the Buddha) could occur, without self-nature (*niḥsvabhāva*) as open (*śūnya*) and interdependent (*pratītya samutpāda*):

> Whatever self-nature is the Tathāgata, that self-nature is the world.
> The Tathāgata is without self-nature and the world is without self-nature.[72]

Nāgārjuna is challenged by an opponent that *śūnyatā* (openness) which denies *svabhāva* (self-nature), also denies the existence of *āryasatya* (the Four Noble Truths):

If all this is open, there is neither arising nor dissolution.
The nonexistence of the four noble truths follows for you.[73]

If noble truth does not exist, knowledge (*parijña*), abandonment (*prahāṇa*), practice (*bhāvanā*), and realization (*sākṣikarma*) do not occur, and thus the four noble fruits (*catvāryāryaphala*), the stage in which the fruits are enjoyed (*phalasthā*), and those who have arrived at the goal (*pratipannaka*) do not exist. If these people do not exist, neither does the Buddhist community (*saṅgha*), in which case the True Teaching (*saddharma*) does not occur. Therefore, says the opponent, Nāgārjuna has denied the existence of the Buddha and the three jewels (*triratna*), as well as openness (*śūnyatā*), good or bad results (*phala-sadbhāvam adharma*), the teachings (*dharma*) and even all worldly everyday activities (*sarvasaṃvyavahāra laukika*).[74]

Nāgārjuna responds by saying that his use of *śūnyatā* has been misunderstood if it is taken to mean nonexistence or nothingness. This is one reason why translating the term "*śūnyatā*" as "emptiness" or "void" is so profoundly misleading.

We reply that here you have not experienced the purpose in openness,
and thus the use of openness is severed from openness by you.[75]

Nāgārjuna here draws a distinction between two truths in the teachings of Gautama ordinary everyday conventional truth (*saṃvṛtisatya*) and higher truth (*paramārthasatya*). And he additionally claims his analysis is orthodox and that the opponent, thinking he is representing the True Teaching, has misunderstood Gautama by not distinguishing two truths in the *sūtras*:

The instruction of the Teachings of the Buddhas are based on two truths,
the truth of common sense conventions about the world and the whole truth in the highest sense of the word.

Those who do not understand the distinction between the two different truths
do not understand the profound reality in the teaching of the Buddha.[76]

Nāgārjuna argues that *paramārthasatya* is not, indeed could not be, taught apart from common practice (*vyavahāra*), ordinary, everyday activities and discourse (including the Four Noble Truths). Higher truth cannot be attained because it is simply the recognition that conventional truth is provisional and nonultimate rather than a truth beyond the conventional that can be explicated.

> The whole truth is not taught independently of common practice.
> Liberation is not accomplished by the unattainable higher truth.[77]

Thus Nāgārjuna can assert that the ordinary everyday world can occur and function, i.e., "be the case or obtain," because *śūnyatā*, i.e., *pratītya samutpāda* (dependent arising), "obtains":

> Because openness obtains, therefore everything obtains.
> If openness does not obtain, then everything does not obtain.[78]

Nāgārjuna turns the tables and argues that his opponent has projected his own errors (*sa tvaṃ doṣānātmanīyān asmāsu paripātayan*) on the Mādhyamikas. He argues that his opponent's view of hypostatized *dharmas* having permanent existence (*svabhāva*) denies causes and conditions, cause, effect, agent, action, activity, arising, cessation, and the fruit of action.[79]

Nāgārjuna must reassert his meaning of the term "*śūnyatā*" as interdependent arising because it is new and thus misunderstood. The opponent has contradicted himself by claiming that *svabhāva* and *pratītya samutpāda* can both exist, that if no interdependent arising exists then interdependent arising exists.

> If all this is not open, arising and dissolution do not exist.
> For you, the nonexistence of the four noble truths follows.[80]

Nāgārjuna's argument rests on orthodoxy as well as logic. Suffering, for example, is said to be impermanent and must be, for if it had self-nature, it would be permanent and thus could not possibly be exinguished. Permanent suffering would have no cure and so the opponent has denied the truth of the Four Noble Truths:

> How will there be suffering that is not interdependently originated?
> Suffering is said to be impermanent.
> Indeed, it does not occur in what is imagined to have self-nature.[81]

Anything having permanent existence (*svabhāva*) can neither arise nor cease. Thus for the opponent, practice of the path does not take place and if it did, *reductio ad absurdam*, self-nature could not exist because suffering would be cured and thus impermanent.[82] Consequently, if suffering does not arise and cease, if suffering is permanent, there is no path that leads to knowledge, i.e., cure, and there is no action whose effect would be a cure:

> There is no thesis by means of self-nature. How is there a thesis or a proposition about it if self-nature is never assuredly established? [83]

A *svabhāvādin* view thus denies the possibility of any thesis about "practice in intuitive perception of abandonment." The same set of denials previously uttered by the opponent follows: the four noble fruits do not occur, the stage in which the fruits are enjoyed and those who have arrived at a goal do not exist, thus the Buddhist community does not exist and so the True Teaching does not occur. How then will the Buddha exist?[84] If the Buddha exists permanently and unchangingly, how would he have achieved *bodhi* (enlightenment)?

> It follows for you that the Buddha is independent of enlightenment.
> And it follows for you that enlightenment is independent of the Buddha.[85]

The opponent has denied the possibility of becoming a *buddha* (awakened one) in asserting the self-nature of a *buddha* or of *bodhi*:

> Whoever is not a *buddha* by means of self-nature, he is striving after enlightenment.
> For you, he will not attain enlightenment in the practices of *bodhisattvas*.[86]

The non*buddha* who is striving for *bodhi* could not achieve it if buddhas have *svabhāva*, permanent, eternal, causeless existence.

Nāgārjuna accuses the opponent (*te*, for you) of denying the efficacy of *bodhisattva* practices. Nāgārjuna does not deny, but affirms the effectiveness of *bodhisattva* practices.[87] By asserting *svabhāva*, the opponent denies the activities of the changing world and rejects Nāgārjuna's new definition of "*śūnyatā*." Nāgārjuna affirms the occurrence (existence as becoming) of the ordinary, everyday world:

> All worldly, everyday activites are denied by you.
> That openness is what is interdependently originated is denied by you.[88]

Nāgārjuna has stipulated a new definition for "*śūnyatā*" as the open-endedness of the *pratītya samutpāda* process in that each *nidāna* (link) is indeterminate (*animitta*) and occurs not independent of but dependent upon others. Nāgārjuna brings out the logic in Gautama's *pratītya samutpāda* teaching. The challenge is to the Sarvāstivāda *svabhāva*vādin interpretation of *dharmas* (and of *nirvāṇa*) by which the ordinary world could not exist because change would be impossible:

> From the denial of openness, there would be nothing to be done, activity would not be begun and the doer would not be doing.
> In the self-nature doctrine, the world, void of a state of diversity, will be unborn, unceasing and unchanging.[89]

The effectiveness of the *bodhisattva* practices depends on the impermanence of suffering, its arising due to conditions and a path leading to its cessation, i.e., the occurrence of interdependency:

> If what is not open does not occur, there is abandonment of all defilements and action that is the end of suffering and attainment of the unattained.
> He who sees interdependent origination sees this; suffering, arising and ceasing and also the path.[90]

In sum, Nāgārjuna's new definition of "*śūnyatā*" makes use of or includes (*upādāya*) the teaching of Gautama (*prajñāpti*):

> What [others call] interdependent origination, we call "openness."

> This teaching, including the path, is the very same as the Middle Way.[91]

Nāgārjuna reaffirms the original teachings of Gautama on interdependent origination:

> The agent depends on action and that depends on an agent.
> We see no other established reason action sets in motion.[92]

And so finally Nāgārjuna concludes that only interdependent events actually occur:

> Not any event not interdependently originated occurs.
> Indeed, not any event that is not open occurs.[93]

Thus Nāgārjuna has reaffirmed the teachings of Gautama on interdependent arising by arguing that the ordinary world and the Buddhist path actually occur, and to suppose they did not would contradict the teaching of the Master, invalidate the path, render it useless and violate ordinary experience. Nāgārjuna's claim to orthodoxy on *pratītya samutpāda* is accurate because Gautama's doctrine is coherent only if *dharmas* actually occur as impermanent and open (*śūnya*) and not as permanent and unchanging (*svabhāva*). That is, Gautama's teachings make sense only if the existence of *dharmas* is provisional (*saṃvṛti*) and not absolute (*svabhāva*). The higher truth (*paramārthasatya*) is that events (*dharmas*) are true only conventionally (*saṃvṛtisatya*). The conventional truth (*saṃvṛtisatya*) is that *dharmas* actually arise. The higher truth (*paramārthasatya*) is that *dharmas* are nonarising.

Nāgārjuna has demonstrated that assigning absolute existence to *dharmas* results in contradiction (*prasaṅga*). A contradiction is always, under all interpretations, false. Gautama taught *saddhamma* (True Teaching) as *ehipassika* (verifiable) because it is *ñāta* (known), *diṭṭha* (seen), and *vidita* (found), which would be impossible if the doctrine contained contradictions.[94] And if the teachings were not true, they could not be useful (*attha*). Thus Nāgārjuna is consistent with the Theravāda *Dharma*, at least on *pratītya samutpāda*, and his claim to

orthodoxy on this matter is accurate given his new stipulated definition of *śūnyatā* as *pratītya samutpāda*.

The distinction between two truths in the teachings of Gautama is also necessary for events to be describable. To repeat, existence does not exist, but becoming does occur. Yet any cogent description of becoming rests on a coherent description of causality and arising. These concepts are reduced to absurdity under analysis by Nāgārjuna and so are incoherent. Thus the higher truth (*paramārthasatya*) is that events in the experienced world cannot be said to arise or cease, be permanent or impermanent, identical or different, to come or go. The higher truth is *dharmas* are open-ended (*śūnya*) and indeterminate (*animitta*). But events are not indescribable (*avarṇya*). Nāgārjuna never argues or suggests that *dharmas* are indescribable. He does argue that ordinary everyday descriptions are provisionally true (*saṃvṛtisatya*), are true in a conventional way, are true unless they are hypostatized, and then subjected to rigorous analysis. This is not to say such descriptions are untrue, i.e., false, but that their truth is limited to conventional use and cannot be extended beyond that limited domain:

> Where the range of thought is renounced, that which can be stated has ceased to be valid.
> Indeed, the nature of events is like *nirvāṇa*, nonarising and nonceasing.[95]

In other words, the process of fixing reality by mental or verbal descriptions is abandoned when it is recognized that such descriptions are the imposition of a fixed realm upon an unfixed one, and the higher truth is that such imposition must be invalid. Such recognition does not result in silence but in nonattachment (*atṛṣṇā*), in not taking descriptions as a source of attachment (*tṛṣṇā*) because they can never encompass the higher truth. Descriptions are true and useful like a raft (the Eightfold Path) that transports beings to the other shore (*nirvāṇa*). But once on the other shore, Gautama suggested there was no use carrying the raft overland. Its value is its usefulness in bringing beings out of suffering.

The higher truth (*paramārthasatya*) is that "the nature of events is like *nirvāṇa*, nonarising and nonceasing." Nevertheless, arising (becoming, *pratītya samutpāda*) can be and is discussed in ordinary ways. The truth and usefulness of the *Buddha Dharma*, reaffirmed by Nāgārjuna as shown above, depends on this. But descriptions of arising have no ultimate validity, are not a higher truth, because to assign a description to an event is to fix and thus falsify what is continuously changing. To fix the event with a word is to make it determinate (*nimitta*) and thus illusory, like a magic show. It is an attempt to make time stand still. How can becoming, change, process, and evolution be described when words function as fixers, determiners (*nimittakrit*) and events are *animitta* (not fixed)? Events are not indescribable but the description cannot capture the higher truth. Thus "the range of thought is renounced." That is, recognizing the limits of language results neither in a catatonic stupor nor even in silent meditation, but rather in a nonattached usage of ordinary language for the purpose of propagating the *Buddha Dharma*, which Nāgārjuna does in the *Ratnāvalī* and the *Suhṛllekha*.

Nāgārjuna adopted the distinction between two truths elucidated by the *Abhidharma* masters but implied in the discourses of Gautama. Ordinary words were used in conventional ways without posing validity and soundness problems so long as it was recognized they were being used conventionally. In the *Dīgha Nikāya*, Gautama said: "All beings (*satta*, Skt. *sattva*) persist through food; [edibles, contact, volition and consciousness], all beings persist through forces (*sankhāra*, Skt. *saṃskāra*)."[96] And in the *Saṃyukta Nikāya* he said: "If there is passion for these four foods, then consciousness is reborn (*punarbhava*)."[97] When asked; "Who eats the consciousness food?," Gautama replied: "That is not a sound (*kalya*) question. I do not say 'eats.' . . . If you were to ask 'of what' is the consciousness food, that would be a sound question. The consciousness food is the condition for the reproduction of rebirth."[98] The same question was asked of touch and desire and the same answer was given.

The term "*satta*" is also used in the *Saṃyukta Nikāya* to indicate that there does not exist someone corresponding to the term "a being"

(or "person," another use). When the nun Vajirā was confused by Māra about how a being arises, who creates the person, etc., she replied:

> Why do you fall back on the term "*satta*"? Māra, you are proceeding from a wrong view. There is a heap of processes, but no being is found therein. Just as "carriage" is used when the parts are combined, so "being" is commonly used when the *khandhas* are present.[99]

The term "*sammuti*" (Skt. "*saṃvṛti*") means common parlance, everyday speech. And there are more than one hundred occurances of *attan* (Skt. *ātman*) in the early *suttas*, primarily as reflexive pronouns (*attānuvāda*, self-reproach, or remorse, etc.), but also in character descriptions (*bhāvitatta*, self-developed or spiritually advanced) and as theoretical constructions (*diṭṭhi*), in which case *attan* is always denied by *anattan* and is therefore a "linguistic taboo."[100] The term "*attan*" is acceptable as *sammuti* (ordinary discourse), but never as *sammādiṭṭhi* (right view), i.e., *paramattha* (higher discourse).

Another example of terms used in ordinary language that do not have genuine referents in higher discourse is "*puggala*" (Skt. "*pudgala*," person) used mainly by Gautama to categorize differences in character, ethical disposition, spiritual aptitude and achievement and karmic destiny, as in the list of *ariya puggala*, Four Noble Persons: stream-winner, once-returner, non-returner, and enlightened one.[101]

More importantly, Gautama spoke, in the *Bhārahāra Sutta*, of "the burden, the bearing of the burden, its being picked up, and set down" and explained *bhārahāra*, "the bearing of the burden," as "*puggalo ti 'ssa vacanīyaṃ; yoyaṃ āyasmā evaṃnāmo evaṃgotto*," "the 'person' is what should be said; that venerable one [monk], of such and such a name, of such and such a family." A later commentary (*Aṭṭhakathā*) on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* explained this passage as: "*iti vohāramatta siddhaṃ puggalaṃ bhārahāro ti katvā dasseti*," "In this way, in using the phrase 'bearing of the burden,' he [Buddha] shows the person to be a matter of mere convention."[102] But the Pudgalavādins did not accept this interpretation and split from the Sthiravāda Elders, establishing a distinct school of Buddhism that flourished for more than seven

hundred years. The Theravāda *Abhidhamma* text *Kathāvatthu* (Points of Controversy) calls the passages cited above concerning food "teaching in terms of a person" (*"puggaladiṭṭhanāya desanāya"*), where "person" is used as a metaphor (*upacara*) for the five *khandhās* just as "village" is a metaphor for "the houses in it."[103]

The distinction between *sammutisacca* and *paramatthasacca*, two kinds of truth, was not drawn in the *Tripiṭaka* either in the *suttas* (though *"sammuti,"* above, and *"paramattha"* as *pattiyā/dassim*, highest goal, occur), or in *Abhidhamma*, but in the commentaries. It was based on a distinction drawn in the discourses between two kinds of *sutta*, "those that are the *nītattha* (from √*nī*, to infer and *attha*, meaning) or 'those of direct meaning' and the *neyyattha* or 'those of indirect meaning.'"[104] Jayatilleke notes that the *Aṅguttara Sutta* stresses the importance of distinguishing the two types of *suttas* and that those who confuse the two misrepresent the Buddha:

> There are these two who misrepresent the Tathāgata. Which two? He who represents a *Sutta* of indirect meaningas a *Sutta* of direct meaning and he who represents a *Sutta* of direct meaning as a *Sutta* of indirect meaning.[105]

Jayatilleke adds that the meaning of a *neyyattha sutta* should be inferred in the light of a *nītattha sutta*, whose meaning is plain and direct. But no mention is made in the *sutta*s or *Abhidhamma* as to which *suttas* are which. The commentary on the *Aṅguttara Sutta* passage above distinguishes a direct from an indirect sutta by example:

> A *Sutta* of the form "there is one individual, O monks," "there are two individuals, O monks," "there are three individuals, O monks," etc., is a *Sutta* of indirect meaning. Here although the perfectly Enlightened One speaks of "there is one person, O monks," etc., its sense has to be inferred since there is no individual in the absolute sense *paramattho*).* But a person because of his folly may take this as a *Sutta* of direct meaning and would argue that the Tathāgata would not have said "there is one individual, O monks," etc., unless a person existed in the absolute sense. Accepting the fact that since he has said so there must be a person in the absolute sense, he represents a *Sutta* of indirect meaning as a *Sutta* of direct meaning. One should speak of a *Sutta* of direct meaning (as of the form), "this

> is impermanent, sorrowful and devoid of substance (soul)." Here the sense is that what is impermanent is at the same time sorrowful and lacking in substance. But because of his folly, this person takes this as a *Sutta* of indirect meaning and extracts its sense saying, "there is something which is eternal, happy and is the soul" and thus represents a *Sutta* of direct meaning as a *Sutta* of indirect meaning.[106]

Thus where the teachings of Gautama are inconsistent, decisions about how to interpret what he really meant were made by the later commentarial tradition, and so schism was inevitable. However, Jayatilleke argues that the commentarial distinction above between *nītattha* and *neyyattha suttas* is valid at least for the *Nikāyas* in that it seems traceable to a distinction made by Gautama himself; there are "expressions, turns of speech, designations in common use in the world which the Tathāgata makes use of without being led astray by them."[107] The examples "*puggala*" and "*satta*" have been discussed above. The words "*aham*" and "*attan*" are used in ordinary discourse, but "This 'I' is not, this self is not."[108] Jayatilleke argues that conventional words (*paññati*) should not be considered as designating what is unreal because the expression "*dukkha-paññati*" is used in the *Saṃyukta Nikāya* and *dukkha* is certainly not considered unreal in the *suttas*. Convention is useful, but conversely, "should not be overstepped." Gautama, in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, says his empirical self or "I" exists; "I did exist in the past, not that I did not; I will exist in the future, not that I will not; I do exist in the present, not that I do not."[109]

Jayatilleke interprets this passage in light of the *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta* (that conventional phrases do not necessarily designate what is unreal) to mean that there is a real empirical "I," but it is not a mysterious entity that persists without being perceived because, as quoted above; "this 'I' is not, this self is not." In other words, because a term has use only in conventional discourse does not make it "unreal," i.e., false.

The commentaries originally distinguished *nītattha* and *neyyattha* as two kinds of discourse, *paramattha* and *sammuti*, not two kinds of truth (*sacca*):

> "Person" refers to conventional speech and not to higher speech.
> Twofold is the teaching of the Buddha, the Venerable One,
> conventional teaching and higher teaching.
> Here "person, being". . . is conventional teaching.
> "Impermanence, suffering, lack of self, the personality heaps" are
> higher teaching.[110]

But the commentaries go "one step further" and distinguish two kinds of discourse, *nītattha* and *neyyattha*, as two kinds of truth, *paramatthasacca* and *sammutisacca*:

> The Awakened One, the best of teachers, spoke of two truths,
> conventional and higher; no third is ascertained;
> a conventional statement is true because of convention and a
> higher statement is true as disclosing the true characteristics of
> events.[111]

Possibly the praise is standard, but it may be that Nāgārjuna was paraphrasing this verse in two Theravāda Commentaries, one on the *Kathāvatthu* (*Kathāvatthuppakaraṇaṭṭhakathā*) and the other on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (*Manorathapūraṇī*) in the famed opening *maṅgalam* to the *MK*. Both greet "the Awakened One" (*sambuddha*) as "the best of teachers" ("*vadatam varo*" in the Pāli texts, "*vadatāṃ varam*" in the *MK*) who, in the preceeding verse of the *Manorathapūraṇī* (also quoted above), taught (*desanā*) a distinction between two truths, whereas in the *MK* he taught (*deśayā*) *pratītya samutpāda*. The *MK* attributes the teaching on two truths to *buddhas* (*buddhānāṃ dharmadeśanā*), but also says that those who do not understand the distinction do not understand the point or profound reality in the teaching of the Buddha (*te tattvaṃ na vijānanti gambhīraṃ buddhaśāsane*).[112] In other words, Nāgārjuna does not claim orthodoxy by attributing the two truths distinction to Gautama, but does claim it by saying the correct interpretation of the Master is that of the Theravāda, Way of the Elders. The Theravāda *Tripiṭaka* is often accepted as the closest recension of the original teachings of Gautama, and if that acceptance is correct, Nāgārjuna's claim to orthodoxy on the two truths is justified.

Jayatilleke suggests that the distinction between two truths is not drawn in the Pāli Canon because two truths would have contradicted

the *Suttanipāta* which says "truth is one without a second."[113] A later text, the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, classified truth (*satya*) in ten divisions, the first described as: "truth is one in the sense of being noncontradictory" while the second as "truth is twofold, conventional truth and higher truth."[114] Although the commentaries to the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* and the *Kathāvatthu* (which distinguish two truths) contradict the earlier *Suttanipāta*'s one truth, Jaytilleke urges that they do not imply that what is true in one is false in the other, that what is true as *paramatthasacca* is false as *sammutisacca* and vice versa, or that one truth is superior to the other, even though one is called *paramattha*, higher, most excellent, last, etc. Translating "*paramattha*" as "absolute," i.e., as falsifying other "truth," is misleading. The commentaries are explicit on the truth of both:

> To those who are capable of listening, penetrating the meaning and, by means of this conventional teaching, discarding ignorance and attaining calm, the Venerable One teaches conventional teaching. To those who are capable of listening, penetrating the meaning and, by means of this higher teaching, discarding ignorance and attaining calm, he teaches the higher teaching. There is a simile: Just as a teacher explains the three *Vedas* in the regional languages, to those who would understand Tamil, he explains in Tamil, to another who would understand Āndhara, he explains in that language . . .[115]

The commentary on the *Kathāvatthu* says, "They, by means of conventional speech, speak only what is true, only what is factual and not false. They, by means of higher speech, speak only what is true, only what is factual and not false." [116] Therefore, Nāgārjuna's use of *saṃvṛtisatya* as conventional truth that is not falsified by *paramārthasatya*, but only limited in applicability to the domain of ordinary everyday discourse, is fully consistent, if not with Gautama, at least with the Theravāda *Tripiṭaka* and commentaries to the *Kathāvatthu* and *Aṅguttara Nikāya*.

It is worth noting that the use of the instrumental case in the passage cited above from the *Manorathapūraṇī* ("*Bhagavā ye sammutivasena sutvā atthaṃ paṭivijjhitvā mohaṃ pahāya visesaṃ adhigantuṃ samatthā tesaṃ sammutidesanaṃ deseti*"; "to those who

are capable of listening, penetrating the meaning and, by means of this conventional teaching, discarding ignorance and attaining calm, the Venerable One teaches conventional teaching," etc.) and the sense of the passage as a whole indicates *upāya kossalla*, the skillful means employed by Buddha in adapting his message to the capacity of his listeners. The term is uncommon in the Pāli Canon and never used by Nāgārjuna. However, the *Majjhima Nikāya* says one of the Gautama's faculties is *upāya kossallam* whereby "he understands the varied capacity of beings [to see] things as they really are."[117] The term (*upāya kauśalya*) is very widely used in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and is associated with the Mahāyāna, particularly the *Prajñāpāramitā* and *Lotus Sūtras*.[118] Nevertheless, there is implied in the commentary passage above and in Nāgārjuna that *saṃvṛtisatya* is the skillfull means used by Gautama to teach the *Buddha Dharma* in that, although he uses words like "I" and "person," he is "not led astray by them," i.e., he uses them as a means to teach skillfully. For Nāgārjuna, as for the Pāli masters, the purpose of *saṃvṛtisatya* is practical:

> Just as the Victorious Ones have spoken of "I" and "mine" for pragmatic reasons, so they have spoken of the personality heaps, the sense-fields and the elements for pragmatic reasons.[119]

Another verse, extant only in Tibetan, says, "The path of origination and destruction (*utpādanirodhamārga*) has been expounded by the Buddha with a practical purpose" (*kāryārtham*).[120] Thus whereas the authors of the Theravāda Commentaries consider such words as "I" and "mine" as *sammutisacca* and Noble Truth, the Eightfold Path, etc., as *paramatthasacca*, Nāgārjuna includes ordinary discourse as well as the *Buddha Dharma* in *saṃvṛtisatya*. But for both, *saṃvṛtisatya* has a practical and soteriological function, not a philosophical function. It is analogous to Gautama who was like a physician removing a poison arrow without being concerned about who shot it, of what wood and feathers it was made, etc., in his skillful teaching of truth and the path.

The passages above on the truth of both *saṃvṛtisatya* and *paramārthasatya* from the Pāli commentaries and from Nāgārjuna raise the question as to whether these are two levels of truth. The

paramārthasatya is not more true than *saṃvṛtisatya*, it is simply true of a wider domain. *Saṃvṛtisatya* is a true description of the world (*loka*) and of the Buddhist teachings, *paramārthasatya* is a true description of the descriptions of world and of the Buddhist teachings. *Paramārthasatya* derives from '*parama*' (higher) and connotes a broader range. Robinson argues that *paramārthasatya* is a meta-language, a language about language, but this is unlikely.[121] *Paramārthasatya* is simply a caveat about *saṃvṛti* expressed on the same, not a higher, "level."

In sum, Nājārjuna is consistent with Gautama on the meaning and salvific role of *pratītya samutpāda*, but unique in his definition of *śūnyatā* as *pratītya samutpāda*. However, this latter move is fully consistent with the Theravāda commentarial tradition on a distinction between two truths. Nāgārjuna defines *pratītya samutpāda* as *śūnyatā* (open-endedness) and thus a higher truth (*paramārthsatya*) is events are not arising and not ceasing, not permanent and not impermanent, not identical and not different, not coming and not going. Because *pratītya samutpāda* is open (*śūnya*), it works or functions as Gautama taught. The conventional truth (*saṃvṛtisatya*) is that *pratītya samutpāda* arises and ceases (is impermanent) and the Tathāgata has come and gone. In sum, *paramārthasatya* is dependent on *saṃvṛtisatya* which teaches the path to *nirvāṇa* for the extinction of suffering.

> Higher truth is not taught independently of common practice.
> *Nirvāṇa* is not accomplished by the unattainable higher truth.[122]

That is, *nirvāṇa* cannot be attained without *saṃvṛtisatya*. The higher truth is that *nirvāṇa* and *paramārthasatya* are open (*śūnya*) and so are unattainable. Attainment, the one who attains and the path to attainment are open-ended and so indistinguishable. Thus *paramārthasatya*, who or what is it that could be said to arise or pass away?

> If all this is open, there is no arising and no passing away.
> Whose extinction is presupposed either through abandonment or through cessation?[123]

By contrast, if the *nidāna* (links) in *pratītya samutpāda* and the one who attains exist permanently without change, if they are not *śūnya* but *svabhāva*, there is also no arising and no passing away:

> If all this is not open, there is no arising and no passing away. Whose freedom is presupposed either through abandonment or cessation?[124]

Nāgārjuna here uses the same method of analysis on *nirvāṇa* as was employed earlier on the concept of suffering to demonstrate that if *nirvāṇa* is interpreted as having *asti* or *nāsti* (existence or nonexistence), *svabhāva*, the teachings of Gautama become incoherent. Again, he defers to the Master, only adding rigor to the teachings, but in this instance, his orthodoxy appears more to the spirit than the letter, though his claim is justified by being consistent with his previous arguments which relied on the canon and the Theravāda commentaries. Nāgārjuna defers to Gautama's description of *nirvāṇa* which is also his own *paramārthasatya* description of *pratītya samutpāda* as *śūnyatā* given in *MK* XXV, 1 above:

> What is not abandoned and not attained, not momentary and not permanent, not destroyed and not produced, this is called *nirvāṇa*.[125]

But if *nirvāṇa* is interpreted to be not arising and not ceasing, etc. because it exists independently (*svabhāva*), then *nirvāṇa* could not occur at all and Gautama's teachings would be incoherent. Only that which arises and ceases actually occurs. On the other hand, *nirvāṇa* is not an existent that occurs like any other, by being born and dying, by arising and passing away:

> Firstly, *nirvāṇa* is not a being characterized by old age and death. Indeed, no being is without old age and death.[126]

Gautama taught and Nāgārjuna demonstrated that what occurs is *pratītya samutpāda*, interdependent arising, which is the process of conditioning. Thus whatever occurs is conditioned. If *nirvāṇa* actually occurs, it must be conditioned:

If *nirvāṇa* is a being, *nirvāṇa* would be conditioned.
Indeed, not any unconditioned being occurs anywhere.[127]

Nāgārjuna is here challenging the Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma* categorization of seventy-five *dharmas* in which space (*ākāśa*) and *nirvāṇa* (*pratisaṅkhyanirodha* and *apratisaṅkhyanirodha*) are *asaṃskṛta*, unconditioned, as denying the actual occurance of *nirvāṇa*.[128] Beings occur due to grasping. If *nirvāṇa* occurs, it must be grasping:

If *nirvāṇa* is an existent, how is it nongrasping?
Nirvāṇa [would not occur] for not any non-grasping being occurs.[129]

Nāgārjuna argues that Gautama's teaching is incoherent if *nirvāṇa* is assumed to have *svabhāva*. Yet if *nirvāṇa* is *niḥsvabhāva*, if *nirvāṇa* occurs, it would be conditioned and grasping. Yet *nirvāṇa* is taught as the cessation of conditioning and grasping. Since *nirvāṇa* is extinction, is it the occurrence of nonexistence? The *MK* argues that would also be incoherent. If being as *svabhāva* does not occur, then nonbeing cannot occur since it is also *svabhāva*. Nonexistence (the son of a barren woman, the horns of a horse) is by its own nature nonexistent, it has permanent nonexistence. But if eternal existence does not occur, i.e., if *svabhāva* does not occur, eternal nonexistence, which also has *svabhāva*, cannot possibly occur:

If *nirvāṇa* is nonexistent, will a nonexistent *nirvāṇa* exist?
Where *nirvāṇa* is nonexistent, no nonexistent occurs there.[130]

The supposition that *nirvāṇa* is nonexistent fails to show that *nirvāṇa* is nongrasping:

If *nirvāṇa* is nonexistent, how is it nongrasping?
Because a nonexistent *nirvāṇa* has no existence, what nongrasping occurs?[131]

Yet the supposition that *nirvāṇa* is grasping and conditioned, i.e., dependent and part of the *pratītya samutpāda* chain, is contrary to the explicit teachings of Gautama:

> That state of moving restlessly to and fro is grasping and dependent [*saṃsāra*].
> But *nirvāṇa* is taught as without grasping and without dependence.[132]

Nāgārjuna had earlier cited Gautama (*Kātyāyanāvavādasūtra*) on *asti* (existence) and *nāsti* (nonexistence) as implying *bhāva* (being, an existent) and *abhāva* (nonbeing, a nonexistent):

> In the instructions to Kātyāyana, both "It is" [existence] and "It is not" [nonexistence] were demonstrated by the Buddha as causing the appearance of a being and a nonbeing.[133]

A view about *bhāva* (an existent) is grasping for *śāśvata* (eternity) and about *abhāva* (a nonexistent) is *uccheda* (nihilism):

> "It is" (existence) is grasping for eternity. "It is not" (nonexistence) is the view of nihilism.
> Therefore, existence and nonexistence would not be resorted to by the wise.[134]

Nāgārjuna does not claim that Gautama said *nirvāṇa* is dependent and grasping, indeed, he notes the opposite. But Gautama did say *nirvāṇa* is neither eternal nor annihilated, etc. (*MK* XXV, 3 above). Given what Gautama said to Kātyāyana concerning the abandonment of existence and nonexistence, Nāgārjuna argues on grounds of textual consistency that it is reasonable (*iti yujyate*) to assert that *nirvāṇa*, which is neither existence nor nonexistence, is neither a being (an existent) nor a nonbeing (an existent):

> The Teacher (Buddha) taught the abandonment of being and nonbeing.
> Therefore, the assertion "*nirvāṇa* is neither an existent nor a nonexistent" is reasonable.[135]

The implications of this "reasonable" assertion are far-reaching. In Nāgārjuna's analysis of Gautama's instructions to Kātyāyana, the impossibility of defining *asti* (existence) also pertains to defining *bhāva* (an existent). *Asti* can be described only if it is determinate, independent of others, in which case it is *svabhāva*, unchanging, and so a description of its actual occurrence is incoherent. The same conundrum holds for *bhāva*. A higher truth *(paramārthasatya)* is that *bhāva* is *animitta*, indeterminate, and open (*śūnya*). If it is defined (i.e., demonstrated, assumed to have *svabhāva*) as an existent, then it must exist independently or permanently and so could not occur in the ordinary world of becoming which arises and ceases. His argument is drawn from Gautama's instructions to Kātyāyana that views about *asti* (existence) "cause the appearance of," i.e., create fictions about *bhāva* (a being who exists). Nāgārjuna reverses the argument; *bhāva* implies *asti* but neither can be can be demonstrated. That is, *nirvāṇa* is neither a being nor a nonbeing because existence can only be asserted where an existent and a nonexistent have already been demonstrated (*siddhi*):

> What is clear is the statement "*nirvāṇa* is not an existent and not a nonexistent."
> It [a demonstration] establishes existence where a being and a nonbeing have been demonstrated.[136]

Nāgārjuna appends further arguments that *nirvāṇa* is neither an existent nor a nonexistent before coming to the above conclusion. The assertion that *nirvāṇa* is both an existent and a nonexistent is rejected as vulnerable to the criticism above of each view; *nirvāṇa* and *mokṣa* (liberation) are equivalent and thus both would be grasping and conditioned and Gautama's teachings would be contradicted:

> If *nirvāṇa* would be both existent and nonexistent, liberation would be both existent and nonexistent. But that does not obtain.
> If *nirvāṇa* would be both existent and nonexistent, *nirvāṇa* would not be nongrasping for both are grasping.[137]

Nāgārjuna defers to Gautama, *nirvāṇa* is unconditioned, *asaṃskṛta*:

> How could *nirvāṇa* be both existent and nonexistent?
> *Nirvāṇa* is unconditioned and both existent and nonexistent are conditioned.[138]

On logical grounds (principle of noncontradiction), just as light and darkness cannot both exist in the same place, so *nirvāṇa* cannot be both existent and nonexistent:

> How could *nirvāṇa* be both existent and nonexistent?
> There is no existence of both, as with light and darkness, in the same place.[139]

And who would know *nirvāṇa* neither exists nor does not exist if the person who "attained" it cannot be said to exist or not exist?

> If *nirvāṇa* is known as neither existent nor nonexistent, it can be made clear by whom as "neither existent nor nonexistent"?[140]

Who is it that exists knowing that *nirvāṇa* is neither being nor nonbeing? Gautama realized *nirvāṇa* and spoke of it, but that is precisely why Gautama cannot be said to exist or not exist either after death or even while living in the world:

> It is not maintained that "the Venerable One exists after death"
> nor is it maintained "he does not exist or both or neither."
>
> It is not maintained "the Venerable One exists while remaining in the world"
> nor is it maintained "he does not exist or both or neither."[141]

These arguments lead to a surprising conclusion that is found in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, and elsewhere in the Mahāyāna literature, but shockingly unorthodox for the early Buddhist schools, namely that *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are equivalent:

> There is no distinction whatever between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.
> There is no distinction whatever between *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra*.[142]

Does the "reasonable" assertion that *nirvāṇa* does not exist and does not "not exist" imply that *nirvāṇa* is conditioned, dependent, and grasping, and *saṃsāra* is unconditioned? Nāgārjuna's stated intention is to maintain a rigorous orthodoxy consistent both with what Gautama said and with what he meant. And just as it is conventionally true (*saṃvṛtisatya*) that *pratītya samutpāda* (interdependent arising) is arising and ceasing, etc., so the higher truth (*paramārthasatya*) is that it is not arising and not ceasing. The same relation holds for *nirvāṇa*. Just as it is conventionally true that *nirvāṇa* is the cessation (*nirodha*) of conditioning (*pratītya samutpāda*), the higher truth is that *nirvāṇa* is not conditioned and not unconditioned.

Higher truth is that conditioning (*pratītya samutpāda*) is open-ended (*śūnya*) and thus *nidāna* do not arise and do not cease, are not eternal and not annihilated, are not identical and not different, are not come and not gone. Nāgārjuna justifiably summarizes all this by saying the higher truth is that *pratītya samutpāda* and *nirvāṇa* do not exist and do not "not exist." They are not existent and not nonexistent not because they have *svabhāva*, independent eternal existence or nonexistence, but because they are *niḥsvabhāva*, open-ended (*śūnya*) and indeterminate (*animitta*). Therefore they can occur.

Conventionally (*saṃvṛtisatya*), *nirvāṇa* is unconditioned. The higher truth (*parmārthasatya*) is that *nirvāṇa* depends on *vyavahāra* (convention), which for Nāgārjuna includes the Eightfold Path:

> Higher truth is not taught independently of common practice.
> *Nirvāṇa* is not attained by the unattainable higher truth.[143]

If *paramārthasatya* is not independent of *vyavahāra*, then, by the law of the excluded middle used by Nāgārjuna (*MK* II, 8), is it dependent on it and thus grasping? The higher truth (*paramārthasatya*) is always "not a view and not its contradiction," the rejection of all four possible views (*dṛṣṭi*), because each *koṭi* is indeterminate. The higher truth is that *nirvāṇa* is not dependent and not independent of convention. As *saṃvṛtisatya*, *nirvāṇa* is unconditioned. Yet it cannot be attained independently of convention (*vyavahāra*). Thus the

attainment of the cessation of conditioning (*nirvāṇa*) is conditioned by (dependent on) conditioning in order to cease. *Nirvāṇa* is the nongrasping of grasping (*upādāya*), and thus depends on there being grasping to not grasp. But the question as to whether *nirvāṇa* is dependent and grasping does not arise. Grasping does not arise.

Paramārthasatya is a caveat about conventions, descriptions of the world, Noble Truth, and the Eightfold Path. It depends on there being *saṃvṛtisatya*. If there were no conventional discourse and truth, there would be no higher discourse and truth. If there was no *pratītya samutpāda*, there would be no *nirvāṇa*. Thus *paramārthasatya* and *nirvāṇa* are dependent on *saṃvṛtisatya* and *pratītya samutpāda*.

Conversely, Nāgārjuna has demonstrated in his analysis of *arya-satya* (Noble Truth) above that *pratītya samutpāda* is dependent on *śūnyatā*; conditioning is dependent on openness. If the *nidāna* along the chain of interdependent arising had *svabhāva*, there could be no cessation of suffering. The Eightfold Path works, functions, and is able to accomplish the goal of *nirvāṇa*, because the links are not fixed, determinate, and eternal, but *niḥsvabhāva*, open, and indeterminate. Thus *saṃvṛtisatya* depends on higher truth, *paramārthasatya*.

In sum, *paramārthasatya* and *saṃvṛtisatya* depend on each other, *śūnyatā* and *pratītya samutpāda* depend on each other. If there was no openness, conditioning would not work and if conditioning did not work, there would be no openness. It is not a unilateral relation. The two are interdependent. And *saṃsāra* is *pratītya samutpāda*, the entire chain of conditioning leading from ignorance and craving to rebirth and suffering. If there was no conditioning *(saṃsāra)*, there would be no cessation of conditioning *(nirvāṇa)*, and if there was no cessation of conditioning, there could be no arising of it since the arising of one link in the chain of *pratītya samutpāda* depends on the cessation of the one before it. Could death arise without birth or vice versa? How could craving (*tṛṣṇā*) arise if feeling (*vedanā*) was ceaseless? The *nidāna* are open (*niḥsvabhāva*), arising, and ceasing. *Nirodha* and *nirvāṇa* are interchangeable terms. Nāgārjuna has already demonstrated the *nirvāṇa* is not a permanent *nirodha*, an eternal nonexistence. It is conventionally true *(saṃvṛtisatya)* that there is arising (*utpāda*) and

cessation (*nirodha*, *nirvāṇa*). But higher truth is that both are open (*śūnya*), like space, and thus there is no arising and no ceasing. Therefore, *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are equivalent:

> The limit of *nirvāṇa* is that of *saṃsāra*.
> The subtlest difference is not found between the two.[144]

This is not to say that *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are the same (*sama*), one (*eka*), or nondual (*advaya*). They are not nondual (*advaita*) as in Vedānta, to use an anachronistic comparison, where *brahman* and *ātman* are one, but distinct because *ātman* is near and *brahman* is far.[145]

It is higher truth *(paramārthasatya)* in the *MK* that there is not even a subtle distinction between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. But in contrast, the identity of *brahman* and *jīva* (as well as the world) is, in Advaita Vedānta, absolute (*paramārthasatya*) and their difference is only apparent, their difference is falsified by *paramārthasatya*. For Nāgārjuna, the higher truth (*paramārthasatya*) is there is not the subtlest distinction between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, but this does not falsify the conventional truth *(saṃvṛtisatya)* that *nirvāṇa* is the cessation of *saṃsāra* and thereby distinct from it.

Nirvāṇa and *saṃsāra* are not the same or one because convention describes *saṃsāra* as conditioning and *nirvāṇa* as cessation of conditioning. The higher truth is the subtlest difference is not found between them because they are like space [*śūnya*], open, indeterminate, and thus there is no determinate basis on which they could be compared for sameness or difference. That *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* are both *śūnya* does not make them the same. The term "*śūnyatā*" has no referent or correspondent within ordinary discourse by which the two could be compared for sameness. The term "*śūnyatā*" functions by pointing to the incoherence of assuming that events are determinate or definable. If events were inherently one thing or another and so could be fixed by a term, they would also be unchanging and ordinary experience as well as the Middle Way and the Eightfold Path would be

impossible. To then assign a determinate, fixed meaning to "*śūnyatā*" utterly misses the point:

> I am not saying that "what is open" or "what is not open" could exist or "both" or "neither."
> They are said only for the purpose of teaching [making conventions known].[146]

Ordinary language functions as conventional truth. To use a term that functions in *paramārthasatya* to describe the truth of *saṃvṛti* in conventional language is, to use an analogy, like using a wrench whose function is to repair the motor as a part in the motor. The term "*śūnyatā*" is a caveat "about" the truth of *saṃvṛti* and has no meaning, no use, no function, within conventional discourse or truth. *Śūnyatā* functions when *saṃvṛti* is recognized as merely conventional and so used without attachment. The terms "*prajñapti*" and "*saṃvṛti*" are interchangeable.[147] "'*Śūnyatā*' is used only for the purpose of making conventions known [*prajñaptyartham*]."

Saṃsāra and *nirvāṇa* are equivalent because they are both *śūnya*, open like space, without determinate edges, limits, or boundaries that separate them, and thus they, so to speak, merge or melt and become indistinguishable. The higher truth is that they are like space, they do not exist and they do not "not exist." *Nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* are formally equivalent because the relation between them is one of mutual entailment, where there is *nirvāṇa*, there is *saṃsāra*, and where there is *saṃsāra*, there is *nirvāṇa*:

> Neither is *nirvāṇa* only *saṃsāra* nor is *saṃsāra* removed away.
> Where there is *nirvāṇa*, there is *saṃsāra*. Which is caused to be discriminated from which?[148]

In short, there is *nirvāṇa* if and only if there is *saṃsāra*. Another way of stating the relation of equivalence is: There is either both *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* or there is neither *nirvāṇa* nor *saṃsāra*.[149] Independent in *saṃvṛtisatya*, they are interdependent or equivalent in *paramārthasatya* which rejects the entire *catuṣkoṭi* (fourfold negation). Nāgārjuna's logic on the equivalence of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* is

impeccable. Given the stipulated definition of *śūnyatā* as *pratītya samutpāda*, Nāgārjuna demonstrates that interdependent arising only functions if *dharmas* (events) are *niḥsvabhāva* (lacking determinate nature, open). As in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, the nature of *dharmas* is to not have a nature. The proof follows directly that *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* are equivalent.[150]

To summarize, unconditioned *nirvāṇa* is dependent on conditioning *(saṃsāra)* and so it can actually occur in the conventional practice of the Eightfold Path and was attained by Gautama. Yet the higher truth (*paramārthasatya*) is that *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, *pratītya samutpāda*, and the Tathāgata do not exist and do not "not exist." Nothing remains to be done but to teach, without attachment, the *Buddha Dharma* so beings may come out misery. But if beings then become attached to the Eightfold Path, what was meant to liberate them becomes the source of misery:

> Those who say; "*Nirvāṇa* will be mine," their grasping of the nongrasping of freedom is a gigantic grasping.[151]

In this case, nothing remains to be done but teach beings the openness (*śūnyatā*) of bondage (*bandhana*) and liberation (*mokṣa*):

> If grasping is bondage, he [who is grasping] is not bound by
> grasping nor is he bound by not grasping.
> But who remains bound by grasping?
>
> If bondage would be prior to what is bound, freely it would bind
> what does not exist.
> The rest is discussed by going, gone and not gone.
>
> Therefore, the bound is not released by the unbound nor is the
> unbound released by the bound.
> In presently releasing the bound, bondage and release would be
> simultaneous.[152]

Conventionally (*saṃvṛtisatya*), the cessation of *saṃsāra* does occur, but the question as to whether *nirvāṇa* is dependent and grasping (*graha*) is like asking where the fire goes when the fire goes

out. Conventionally, *nirvāṇa* is not conditioned or grasping. But the question simply does not arise for *paramārthasatya* any more than does the question of whether the Buddha exists or does not exist:

> In what is open by nature, this thought: "The Buddha exists or does not exist after death" does not occur.[153]

Saṃvṛtisatya is a true description of the world (*loka*) and the Buddhist teachings. *Paramārthasatya* is a true caveat about those descriptions of the world and of the Buddhist teachings with a philosophical function that, in the end, also serves a soteriological function. That is, the Eightfold Path as conventionally described leads to the extinction of suffering, i.e., *nirvāṇa* (soteriological function). Yet the higher truth is that if suffering exists independently of all else and is thus distinctly definable, it could never become extinct (philosophical function). Realizing that suffering has no such independent existence, i.e., is not immutable, is *buddhi śiva*, emancipating insight (soteriological function):

> But those of inferior insight who see only the existence and nonexistence of beings do not see the emancipating cessation of appearances.[154]

The cessation of appearance is the nonconstruction of false imaginings, i.e., not imagining events in the chain of interdependent arising to have *svabhāva*, independent existence:

> Because of the destruction of action and defilement, there is liberation.
> There are actions and defilements for one having false notions.
> They must be constructed from false imaginings and stopped by openness.[155]

These false imaginings about the determinate existence of the *nidāna* constitute ignorance and lead, link by link through *pratītya samutpāda*, to the composition of dispositions, of habitual reaction patterns (*saṃskāra*), which are the roots of *saṃsāra*:

Hence, the ignorant compose dispositions, the roots of *saṃsāra*.
Therefore the ignorant create, while the wise, seeing reality, do not.[156]

But the capacity of the entire chain of conditioning to cause suffering is dissolved and liberation is achieved when ignorance is destroyed by knowledge, i.e., knowledge that the *nidāna* in *pratītya samutpāda* are without permanent existence (*niḥsvabhāva*) and so are open (*śūnya*). Thus no one can grasp or be grasped by them:

Since the destruction of dispositions is the cessation of ignorance,
the cessation of ignorance is from practice based on knowledge.

With the cessation of it [ignorance], which of it [link on the chain of interdependent arising] advances to what [next link]?
Thus this entire mass of suffering is rightly ceased.[157]

By bringing out (*neyartha*) the way Gautama used language but was not led astray by it, Nāgārjuna found a way other than meditation (*prajñā*) to break the chain of conditioning, namely by *jñāna*, philosophical knowledge. Ignorance ceases by *jñāna*. The term "*prajñā*" (wisdom, insight) is never used in the *MK*.

Another and analogous way of interpreting Nāgārjuna is that the Eightfold Path has a soteriological function, but attachment to the Eightfold Path, to the Buddha, etc., is *tṛṣṇā* (a source of suffering). Therefore *paramārthasatya*, serving the philosophical function of providing a rigorous account of the *Buddha Dharma*, shows the Eightfold Path as practical (*kāryavaśa*) whereas the higher truth is that there is no suffering, no arising, no cessation. Knowledge that the open-endedness (*śūnyatā*) of events is not described by words, which reify or fix reality, is liberation (*śiva*) from attachment to views (*dṛṣṭi*), including the teachings of Buddhism, the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Liberation (*śiva*) is thus the cessation of thought (*sarvopalambhopaśama*) and the quieting of phenomena (*prapañcopaśama*). Consequently, *śūnyatā* also has a soteriological function:

Liberation is the cessation of all thought, the quieting of phenomena.
Not any doctrine anywhere has been taught to anyone by the Buddha.[158]

The arguments that *nirvāṇa* could not actually occur unless it is, in some sense or another, conditioned and dependent, are made on the grounds of coherence. Gautama's teaching would be incoherent if *nirvāṇa* had *svabhāva*, permanent, unchanging eternal existence or nonexistence, because *nirvāṇa* could not actually occur in the changing world, and Gautama would never have "attained" it. But the assertion that the question does not arise because *saṃvṛtisatya* is that *nirvāṇa* is unconditioned, and *paramārthasatya* is that it is not conditioned and not unconditioned is made on the grounds of consistency with the early *Tripiṭakas*. The argument that because *nirvāṇa* does not exist and does not "not exist," so *pratītya samutpāda* does not exist and does not "not exist" are also made on the grounds of consistency. The teachings of Gautama (whatever recension) would be inconsistent given the *anātman* and *anitya* doctrines and the teachings that *nirvāṇa* and the Tathāgata do not exist and do not "not exist" if the *nidāna* (*dharma* links) in *pratītya samutpāda* had *svabhāva*, permanent existence. Thus Nāgārjuna counterargued the svabhāvādin view both on consistency and coherence. Nāgārjuna said that his conclusions are "reasonable," not that they are textual.

In so far as a distinction between two truths drawn in the Theravāda commentaries, based on the *Tripiṭaka* and used by Nāgārjuna to distinguish what was meant in what was said, is orthodox, then the assertion that *nirvāṇa* is equivalent to *saṃsāra* is also orthodox provided that *śūnyatā* is not itself taken to have *svabhāva*, is not taken to be a term that has a referent within conventional discourse. If the term "*śūnyatā*" is interpreted to have a referent within *saṃvṛtisatya* to which *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* could be compared for similarity, oneness, or nonduality, then Nāgārjuna would have contradicted the teachings of Gautama that *nirvāṇa* is the cessation of *saṃsāra* and his claim to orthodoxy would be false. Although Nāgārjuna appears to be an iconclast in relation to early schools and, in so far as he is not asserting nondualism, an iconoclast in relation to the Mahāyāna, his intention is clearly to bring out a philosophically valid interpretation of *buddhavacana*, what the Buddha said. Whether he has suceeded depends on whether *śūnyatā* is a view (*dṛṣṭi*).

Nāgārjuna repeatedly urges that *śūnyatā* is not a view. It cannot be used to refute his arguments against *svabhāva*. An opponent who asserts that *śūnyatā* has *svabhāva* is defeated because *śūnyatā* means *niḥsvabhāva* and so the opponent has asserted exactly what Nāgārjuna asserts, that self-nature is the lack of self-nature:

> Whoever argues against openness for the sake of refuting an argument,
> all his refutations do not refute for he is conquered by the same proof.[159]

> Since beings are viewed as having no self-nature in a changing nature
> and a being lacking self-nature does not exist,
> then openness [is the self-nature] of beings.[160]

Śūnyatā is not a view because it cannot be used to explain anything. Again, *śūnyatā* means *niḥsvabhāva*, that events are indeterminate (*animitta*) and thus cannot be determined or ascertained by means of indeterminacy, openness:

> Whoever explains by means of openness for the sake of ascertaining,
> all his ascertainments do not ascertain for he is conquered by the
> same demonstration.[161]

Śūnyatā is like space, there is nothing to cling to, nothing to grasp. The higher truth (*paramārthasatya*) is the elements, *nirvāṇa*, the Tathāgata and *pratītya samutpāda* are like space (*ākāśa*), they do not exist and they do not "not exist:"

> Therefore space is neither an existent nor a nonexistent, neither the
> characterized nor a characteristic.
> The other five elements are the same as space.[162]

Clinging to the Tathāgata, to what is open, as if he was someone who exists, is like becoming, to quote the *Aṣṭa*, entangled in space:

> And thus the one who clings is clinging to what is everywhere open.
> How is the open Tathāgata known by means of what is open?[163]

Nāgārjuna is not asserting that the term "*śūnyatā*" has any meaning within conventional discourse. It is a caveat about discourse used only for the purpose of pointing out its provisionality:

> I am not saying that "what is open" or "what is not open" could exist or "both" or "neither."
> They are said only for the purpose of making conventions known.[164]

Śūnyatā is defined as the open-endedness of *pratītya samutpāda,* but interdependence cannot be established by openness because it is not a view. Nāgārjuna gives as an example the relation between fire and fuel; fire depends on fuel, but fuel is not fuel without fire:

> If fire is dependent on the fuel of fire, the establishment of proof will thus be the existence of fuel where there is no fire.
>
> What demonstrates the dependence demonstrated by the dependence of which being?
> If what is to be depended upon is what has demonstrated that, which is dependent on which?
>
> How is that dependence demonstrated by the being who is not established in dependence?
> But the demonstration of dependence does not occur in dependence.[165]

In sum, fire is not dependent on and not independent of fuel.[166] Because events are open, having no determinate self-nature, they are like illusions and shadows. Error, such as the view "there is permanence in impermanence," i.e., *svabhāva* in *niḥsvabhāva* (*śūnyatā*), cannot be seized in what has no nature, is open and indeterminate:

> Physical form, sound, taste, touch, smell and events are all made-up imaginary cities in the sky, like dreams and mirages.
>
> Where will purity or impurity be in these people equal to illusions and like shadows?
>
> Indeed, we teach that purity is to depend on impurity not existing and purity depends on that. Therefore, purity does not happen.

> Indeed, we teach that impurity is to depend on purity not existing and impurity depends on that. Therefore, impurity does not occur.
>
> Where purity is not present, from where will passion arise?
> Where impurity is not present, from where will hatred arise?
>
> If the error "there is permanence in impermanence" is so seized, impermanence does not occur. Where is error seized in what is open?[167]

Nāgārjuna argues that if anything existed that is not open, then nothing would be open because that thing would be permanent, unchanging, and independent of everything else. But in that case, everything else that existed would also have to have *svabhāva* in order for it to remain independent. Therefore, if there is nothing that is not open, why would there be the real permanent nonopen existence of openness?

> If something would be nonopen, then nothing would be "open."
> If nothing is nonopen, why will there be open? [168]

In other words, *śūnyatā* is not a view, a term that refers to something that is *śūnyatā* any more than the term "*anātman*" refers to some invisible being who is the nonself. *Śūnyatā* is not even the characteristic of characteristiclessness because that would assert the permanent existence of something that is at the same time said not to exist. The conquerers, i.e., *bodhisattvas* in the *Aṣṭa* who destroyed a jungle of views, taught *śūnyatā* as the refutation of all views. Nāgārjuna calls those who hold openness as a view incurable:

> Openness was taught by Conquerers as a refutation of all views.
> But those who hold openness as a view are called irremediable.[169]

As argued above, the purpose of *śūnyatā* is to release beings from attachment to views, including Noble Truth and the Eightfold Path. If beings then become attached to a reified *śūnyatā*, the purpose of the move is defeated:

> We reply that here you have not experienced the purpose in openness,
> and thus the use of openness is severed from openness by you.[170]

Attachment to a reified *śūnyatā*, the fiction that *śūnyatāvāda* is a view, prevents liberation from attachment (*tṛṣṇā*) and thus leads inevitably to suffering (*duḥkha*). Thus knowledge meant to liberate beings from suffering becomes the source of suffering, destroying the one who holds *śūnyatāvāda* as a view:

> Openness wrongly conceived destroys the dimly-witted.
> It is like a snake grasped by the head or a garbled incantation.[171]

Nāgārjuna asserts his orthodoxy in maintaining that Gautama was tempted to not teach, knowing that beings would become attached to his teachings and thus use the *Dharma* that was meant to liberate as a source of further bondage:

> And hence the Sage's thought was turned against causing the
> doctrine to be taught.
> The purpose of the teaching is difficult to fathom for the lazy.[172]

In the *Vigrahavyāvartinī*, the opponents assert that if self-existence does not exist, that very statement is without self-existence and so cannot discard self-existence. Nāgārjuna replies:

> The statement has no self-nature, therefore mine is not refuted.
> There is no inconsistency, no cause for disagreement and nothing to
> discuss.[173]

Nāgārjuna admits that had he asserted any proposition (that a *dharma* or *śūnyatā* has *sat* or *asat*, a nature that could be determined), he would be in error. But he did not assert any proposition:

> If I had any proposition, then error would be mine.
> No proposition is mine, therefore no error is mine.[174]

To the naive objection that if events have no self-nature, even the term "no self-nature" would not exist because words refer to objects that exist, Nāgārjuna replies:

> He who would say "the named has self-nature and therein real existence"
> is thus contradicted by existenceness, but we do not say what is named exists.[175]

The classical example of a name that could not refer to a being in the world, "the son of a barren woman," comes from Nāgārjuna's commentator Candrakīrti. Such existence would would be logically impossible. The example used by Nāgārjuna in the *Lokātītastava* is of a coherent expression that, though logically possible, has no empirical referent in the world, "*aśvavisāṇa*" (the horns of horse).[176]

Nāgārjuna's reasoning is clear enough. If *śūnyatā* is a view, he would have to stipulate another term to point to the impossiblity of determining the nature of any event that changes. But that is precisely the function of the term "*śūnyatā*." Stipulating another term would lead to an infinite regress. Thus allowing Nāgārjuna his new stipulated definition of the term "*śūnyatā*" seems reasonable.

One major objection to taking Nāgārjuna at his word that *śūnyatā* is not a view is his use of the term "*tattva*," often translated as "The Real" or "Reality." It is thereby maintained that Nāgārjuna is asserting a view about Reality, namely that it is *śūnyatā*. The term "*śūnyatā*" is often translated as "Emptiness," "the Empty," "the Void," or "Nothingness." Such a translation may be interpreted as making Nāgārjuna a nihilist. Yet he denies *nāsti* as shown above because it was rejected by Gautama and thereby denies the charge of nihilism.[177] Is there any interpretation of *tattva* and *śūnyatā* that renders his denial of holding a view coherent? If not, then Nāgārjuna did not know what he was saying. Given his influence in the history of Buddhism, the benefit of the doubt should be extended by hypothesis.

First, quoted above, Nāgārjuna argues that when it is realized that events (*dharmas*) are not independent (*svabhāva*) but interdependent (*pratītyasamutpāda*) and thus indeterminate (*animitta*) because they

cannot be defined independent of all else, *cittagocara* (the range of thought, thinking that words describe reality) is renounced as invalid. A higher truth (*paramārthasatya*) is that events, like *nirvāṇa*, are not arising and not ceasing because fixed conceptions of them are reduced to absurdity (*prasaṅga*) or incoherence under analysis (*parīkṣā*):

> Where the range of thought is renounced, that which can be stated
> has ceased to be valid.
> Indeed, the nature of events is like *nirvāṇa*, nonarising and
> nonceasing.[178]

This does not mean that events are indescribable or that the one who has knowledge (*jñāna*) of higher truth is reduced to silence, but that conventional discourse (*vyavahāra*) is true (*saṃvṛtisatya*) and thus useful (*kāryavaśa*) provided it is not reified (*śūnyatā*) and thus made fictional (*prapañca*).

Nāgārjuna immediately follows the verse above with a reiteration of Gautama's method of analysis by means of a fourfold logic (*catuṣkoṭi*), saying *sarvam* (all) is *tathya*, not *tathya*, both or neither. "All," as is clear from the context, means all events in the world, and the term "*tathya*" means what is really so or true:

> All [events] are really so [true, factual], not really so,
> both really and not really so, neither really so nor not really so.
> This is the teaching of the Buddha.[179]

Again, because Nāgārjuna is claiming orthodoxy, it is helpful to consult the early *suttas* in interpreting the *MK*. The *catuṣkoṭi* was delineated by Gautama in the *Cūlamālunkya Sutta* in the *avyākṛta*, the unanswered questions as to whether the world is eternal, noneternal, both, or neither; whether the world is finite, infinite, both, or neither; whether the Tathāgata exists or does not exist after death, both, or neither. Gautama did not answer these questions because, on analogy with the poison arrow, the answers would be irrelevant to curing suffering. Gautama did not enter silent meditation when he did not answer these questions, but taught the analogy of the poison arrow and for forty years taught the Eightfold Path to cure *duḥkha*.

The *Saṃyukta Nikāya* and the *Kathavatthu*, a Theravāda commentary, state the principle of noncontradiction (no statement can be both true and false).[180] In terms of Aristotelian logic, the *catuṣkoṭi* in the *Nikāyas* asserts the second position (No S is P) as the contrary of the first (All S is P) and the both/and position as a contrary that is the conjunction of two existentially quantified propositions [(Some S is P) and (Some S is not P)] which contradicts the first two positions. Nāgārjuna, however, thinks of these oppositions as contradictions.[181] For Nāgārjuna, the second position (No S is P) is the contradiction of the first (All S is P) and the both/and position is a contradiction even where it is existentially quantified (Some S is P and some S is not P). Nāgārjuna considers these oppositions to be contradictions because he rejects them on the principle of noncontradiction:

> A true or untrue agent does not do what is true or untrue,
> because existence and nonexistence are mutually contradictory.[182]

In Aristotelian terms, the above is a contrary (*sacca ca asacca*) rather than a contradiction (*sacca cana sacca*), as is the verse that *nirvāṇa* is neither existent (*bhāva*) nor nonexistent (*abhāva*), like "light and darkness not occuring in the same place." But unquantified *bhāvābhāva* is considered a contradiction by Nāgārjuna and rejected.

The *Dīgha Nikāya* confirms "both/and" as a noncontradiction when it is existentially quantified (some part is, some part is not) "*antavā ayaṃ loko* (*parivatumo*)," the world is finite in all respects, "*ananto ayaṃ loko* (*apariyanto*)," the world is infinite in all respects, "*antavā ca ayam loko ananto ca*," the world is finite in some respect and infinite in another respect, "*n'evāyaṃ loko antavā na panānanto*," the world is neither infinite in some respect nor finite in some respect (the terms do not apply).[183]

Nāgārjuna also uses the both/and position for existential quantification but, unlike the *Nikāyas*, rejects them as contradictions because they are conjoined. The conjuncts imply *svabhāva* and the world cannot be said to have part of a nature if its nature occurs as indeterminate:

> But if one part is finite and one part is infinite, the world would be finite and infinite and that does not occur.[184]

In the *MK*, where the both/and position is quantified, neither/ nor is proved because if finite and infinite are contradictory, then the world is neither finite nor infinite. Since *dharmas* lack *svabhāva*, the finitude or infinity of the world is indeterminate:

> If both finite and infinite is established,
> then "neither finite nor infinite" is also intentionally proved.[185]

The *Nikāyas* also accept the law of the excluded middle (any statement is either true or false), which Jayatilleke prefers to call the law of exclusion because there is no middle among four possible positions.[186] An example from the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* is:

> Supposing I say "I know what has been seen, heard, sensed, thought, attained, sought, and reflected upon by the class or recluses and brahmins," then it would be false for me to say I do not know what has been seen, heard, . . . it would likewise be false for me to say, "I know and do not know what has been seen, heard, . . ." and false for me to say "I neither know nor do not know what has been seen, heard, ..."[187]

In sum, Jayatilleke says if one alternative is taken as true, all the others are held to be false. Nāgārjuna also accepts the law of the excluded middle or principle of exclusion:

> So long as a nongoer does not go, a goer also does not go.
> Other than a goer and a nongoer, who is the third that goes? [188]

The neither/nor position is often interpreted, for Nāgārjuna as well as the early tradition, as complete denial, skepticism, and thus as the inexpressibility of truth.[189] But the *Majjhima Nikāya* confirms neither/nor as a noncontradiction "*puggalo attantapo . . .*," the person who torments himself (ascetic), "*puggalo parantapo . . .*," the person who torments another (hunter), "*puggalo attantapo parantapo ca . . .*," the person who torments both himself and another (king who initiates

sacrifice) and "*puggalo n'evattantapo na parantapo* . . .," the person who torments neither himself nor another (*arhant*).[190] Jayatilleke argues that even in those cases where the linguistic form appears to assert a contradiction, it is not a contradiction.[191]

In sum, the four positions are meaningful propositions and not contradictions for the early Buddhists. And, unlike the skeptics, the early Buddhists rejected, not negated, all four positions when the question was held to be meaningless (*ṭhapanīya pañha*). The *avyākata* were rejected, set aside, with the phrase "*mā h'evam*," "do not say so," because they were *kallo pañho*, not proper questions. Only very rarely in the Pāli Canon are all four positions negated, answered with the phrase "*na h'idam*," "it is not so."[192]

Jayatilleke argues that the *avyākṛta* were rejected because they were neither true nor false but indeterminate, as in the moral sphere where "what is indeterminate (*avyākata*) are acts which are neither good nor evil."[193] It is precisely for these reasons that Nāgārjuna also rejects the *catuṣkoṭi*. First, Nāgārjuna rejects the *catuṣkoṭi* for the same reason the four alternative positions were rejected by Gautama; they are not conducive to peace and happiness:

> Where within fourfold permanence, impermanence, etc., is peace?
> Where within fourfold finitude, infinity, etc., is happiness?[194]

Nāgārjuna also rejects the *catuṣkoṭi* because it is based on improper questions. Whether the Buddha exists or does not exist after death does not occur in one who has dispensed with the fantasy that the Tathāgata exists permanently or never existed. Whether the Buddha exists or not, he would be considered nonexistent (*nirvṛtti*):

> You are grasped and destroyed by grasping false imaginings that
>   the Tathāgata "exists" or "does not exist."
> He would be imagined to be the same as one who is deceased.
>
> In what is open by nature, this thought; "The Buddha
> exists or does not exist after death" does not occur.[195]

Third, while the *Nikāyas* hold one of the four positions to be true and all others false by the law of exclusion, Nāgārjuna negates each position, thus rejecting the *catuṣkoṭi* and the law of exclusion he had previously accepted in *MK* II, 8. For example, suffering is not caused by the self because if the one who is not now suffering had permanent existence, he could never be the same as the one who is caused to suffer. For the same reason, suffering is not caused by another because a permanent nonsufferer could not be caused to suffer. It is not caused by both self and another because it would have to be caused one by one and the same difficulty would apply. Yet suffering is dependent and does not occur without a cause.[196]

> Indeed, not only does the fourfold account of suffering not occur,
> but also the fourfold account of the downfall of beings does not
> occur.[197]

Nāgārjuna rejects the *catuṣkoṭi* because, just as some acts in the Pāli Canon are morally indeterminate (*avyākṛta*), neither good nor evil but neutral, so *dharmas* (events) are indeterminate (*animitta*), having neither existence nor nonexistence. They are interdependent (*śūnyatā*) and open-ended and so views about them, which would depend on *dharmas* being determinate, cannot develop:

> Because of the openness of all beings, why, which, of what,
> where will views about permanence, etc., develop?[198]

Nāgārjuna rejects the *catuṣkoṭi* by a series of what he considers contradictions in what becomes part of the opening *maṅgalam* to the *MK*:

> First off, what arises depending on that is not identical to and not
> different from that.
> Therefore that is not disrupted and not permanent [not annihilated
> and not eternal].
>
> Not differentiated, not identical, not momentary, not permanent,
> this is the immortal teaching of the buddhas, lords of all the
> worlds.[199]

Superficially, these negations look like an assertion of the neither/nor position in the *catuṣkoṭi*. But they are not. The third position, both/and, is a conjunction that negates (contradicts) the first two:

"Both differentiated and not differentiated."

Given the law of exclusion (accepted and rejected by Nāgārjuna), if it not differentiated, then it is identical, the above equals:

"Both differentiated and identical."

The fourth position (neither/nor, not/or) is an assertion of the law of exclusion. It negates a conjunction and is thus a disjunction with the negative distributed, exactly as it is stated:[200]

"Neither differentiated nor identical," which logically states:
"Not differentiated or identical."

Nāgārjuna rejects all four positions of the *catuṣkoṭi* and asserts a series of conjunctions, not disjunctions.

"Not differentiated and not identical."

The difference is significant. The oppositions are tautologies (always under all interpretations true) when disjoined, but contradictions (always under all interpretations false) when conjoined. "Not differentiated or identical," under the law of exclusion, is, "Not differentiated or not differentiated," a tautology. Nāgārjuna rejects "both existent and nonexistent" as a contradiction and asserts *nirvāṇa*, the Tathāgata and *pratītyasamutpāda* as "not existent and not nonexistent." This is not the fourth *koṭi*, "not existent or existent," but its negation. By rejecting the fourth *koṭi* (the law of exclusion) and by asserting this contradiction, Nāgārjuna rejects both the law of exclusion and the *catuṣkoṭi*. The term "existence" implies that *dharmas* are determinate, have *svabhāva*, eternal existence or nonexistence. "Not differentiated

and identical (not nondifferentiated)" implies that events are indeterminate.

To return to the meaning of *tattva*; what occurs, what is true (*tathya*) is *pratītya samutpāda* (interdependency) because no *dharma* is determinate and fixed, but each is open-ended. Because *dharmas* are indeterminate, there is nothing by which they can be compared as identical or different. For Nāgārjuna, the expressions "nonidentical and nondifferent (*anekārtham anānārtham)*, nonceasing and nonarising (*anirodha anutpāda)*, nonmomentary and nonpermanent (*anuccheda aśaśvata)*, not coming and not going (*anāgama anirgama)*" are contradictions which describe the higher truth (*paramārthasatya*) about *pratītya samutpāda* (interdependency). If this series of contradictions were negated, Nāgārjuna would, by the law of exclusion, be asserting a true statement and would therefore be asserting a view. But Nāgārjuna does not negate them, he asserts these contradictions as the meaning of *pratītya samutpāda*:

> I greet the best of teachers, that Awakened One, who taught
> liberation, the quieting of phenomena, interdependent arising:
> Not ceasing and not arising, not momentary and not permanent,
> not identical and not different, not coming and not going.[201]

Since Nāgārjuna asserts a series of contradictions, what is it that he is asserting? A contradiction is certainly not a view. He is saying that *dharmas* are *niḥsvabhāva* (indeterminate). There is no view to maintain, nothing to grasp and nowhere to stand. The terms are contradictory only if *dharmas* are assumed to have *svabhāva*. In so far as it is recognized that they are *niḥsvabhāva*, not only is no contradiction asserted, nothing is asserted whatsoever. For example, where there is knowledge (*jñāna*) that *dharmas* lack a determinate self-nature (*niḥsvabhāva*), determinate concepts such as "I" and "mine" do not arise and thus the chain of conditioning ceases:

> Where "I" and "mine" are internally and externally destroyed,
> grasping has ceased. From that destruction birth is destroyed.[202]

As shown above, ignorance is the creation of false notions, i.e., the construction of views that *dharmas* comprising the *nidāna* in the chain of interdependent arising have *svabhāva* (permanent natures) that exist. The wise see *tattva* (reality) and do not construct fictions (*prapañca*) about the *nidāna*.[203] Ignorance ceases with knowledge (*jñāna*) of reality (*tattva*), namely that *dharmas* are *niḥsvabhāva*, lacking permanent natures.[204] Thusly, conditioning ceases.[205] Knowledge that all *dharmas* are open (*śūnya*) is liberation (*śiva*).[206]

Therefore, a higher truth (*paramārthasatya*) is that Gautama did not teach any doctrines, did not teach that "*ātman*" or "*anātman*" are determinate:

> The term "*ātman*" pointed out causes it to be distinct from the term "*anātman*."
> Neither a self nor a nonself are pointed out by the *buddhas*.[207]

Thus the wise, those who do not construct false notions, see *tattva* (reality), see that because events lack self-nature, they cannot be determined and so they are open. They see *pratītya samutpāda*:

> Terrible and vicious views arising from passion and hatred are grasped where existence is affirmed and from that, contentions arise.
>
> That is the cause of all views, without it passions do not arise.
> Where this thesis is analyzed, the view and therefore the passion, is destroyed.
>
> From seeing interdependent arising, "what is its thesis"?,
> the best among knowers of reality [Gautama] said that what is dependently born is unborn.[208]

That is, views result from grasping for existence. Knowledge of reality is knowledge of *pratītya samutpāda*. Another passage, extant in Tibetan, says: "By taking any view whatsoever, one is attacked by the twisting snakes of passion. But those whose minds have nowhere to stand [i.e., no place to settle down] are not caught."[209] *Tattva* therefore is the openness, *śūnyatā*, of *pratītya samutpāda*. Because the *nidāna* (links) and all *dharmas* are open, there is nothing determinate to grasp

and therefore no view to hold. *Dharmas* are thereby peaceful, which is to say, ungraspable:

> Not conditioned by another, peaceful, not constructed by means of false imaginings, free from false discriminations and not differentiated,
> this is the mark of reality.[210]

Tattva is therefore the open *dharmas* that are not grasped or graspable. *Tattva* is "reality" with a lower case "r." *Tattvas* are as numerous as *dharmas*. If *tattva* was said to be *śūnyatā*, the ungraspability of all *dharmas*, then *śūnyatā* would be grasped as the ungraspable, which is like grabbing a snake by the head. Knowledge of *tattva* is knowing not to grasp this particular *dharma* or that one. It is not knowledge of "the Unconditioned" because the term implies determinate *svabhāva* and there can be no grasping where events are not determinate. Thus it is knowledge that this *dharma* is not conditioned and that *dharma* is not conditioned, i.e., not grasped. The "mark of reality" (*"tattva lakṣaṇa"*) is to not have a mark. Reality is indeterminate (*animitta, alakṣaṇa*). *Tattva* is simply *dharmas* without grasping, *pratītya samutpāda* without grasping (attachment). Seeing *tattva* is seeing the world *yathābhūtam* (as it really is), without passion, aggression, and ignorance. As in the *Buddhacarita*, the world thusly seen is the ordinary world with all its suffering, etc., but there is no greed for it and no hatred of it and yet it is not ignored. Therefore, the *bodhisattva* can work in the world for the welfare of beings because whatever arises, though agitating to one who assumes *svabhāva*, is peaceful to one who knows the nature of *svabhāva* is no nature (*niḥsvabhāva*):

> That which comes into being dependently, that is inherently peaceful.
> Therefore arising and presently arising are peaceful.[211]

This peace is *draṣṭavyopaśama śiva*, the emancipating cessation of appearances, the nonconstruction of fantasies about events having permanent natures and existence.

Pratītya samutpāda is the arising and ceasing of *dharmas* which are indeterminate (*animitta*) and open-ended (*śūnyatā*). The *nidāna* do not have eternal existence or eternal nonexistence, yet determinate "names" for them imply *svabhāva*. Therefore, what is it that can be said to arise? What can be said to cease? Events could not arise or cease unless they were indeterminate. The ordinary use of language (*saṃvṛtisatya*) describes events truthfully provided the descriptions are not reified. Nāgārjuna does not fall silent, but uses paradoxical language to point to a lack of determinateness, the *niḥsvabhāva* of dharmas, *śūnyatā*, by saying that events are not arising and not ceasing. If the point of *śūnyatā* is taken and arising and ceasing are not reified, not taken to have *svabhāva*, then language has been used without grasping by means of paradox, not contradiction.

Just as the neither/nor position in the *Nikāyas* is the neutral position (the *arahant* who torments neither himself nor others, who feels neither pleasure nor pain, etc.), so for Nāgārjuna, *pratītya samutpāda*, *śūnyatā* (becoming) is the neutral middle position between *asti* (existence) and *nāsti* (nonexistence). It is not the case that *dharmas* exist and it is not the case that *dharmas* do not exist, they are indeterminate. This is the zero position, neither positive nor negative, but midway between them. Nāgārjuna is not negating but abandoning views. He concludes the *MK* with a salutation to Gautama who, out of compassion, abandoned or rejected (not negated) all views.

> I bow to him, Gautama, who, because of compassion,
> taught the true Teaching for the purpose of abandoning all views.[212]

By adopting the Theravāda commentarial distinction between two truths, both of which are true, but in broader and more limited domains, Nāgārjuna applies it to the Theravāda interpretation of *dharmas* as *svabhāva* (permanent and determinate) to show that such a view is contradictory, rendering the teachings of Gautama incoherent. That is, Nāgārjuna has used the Theravāda commentarial distinction between two truths to show the Theravāda interpretation of *dharmas* as *svabhāva* is incoherent. By adopting the two truths and disproving the

permanent existence (or nonexistence) of *dharmas*, Nāgārjuna has added rigor to the teachings of Gautama on *pratītya samutpāda*, making them philosophically consistent. If Gautama had meant that *dharmas* comprising the *nidānas* (links) in the chain of interdependent origination had *svabhāva* (permanent and determinate), there would be no end of *duḥkha* (suffering), the *anātman* teaching would be inconsistent and Gautama could not have realized the liberation of *nirvāṇa*.

In sum, Nāgārjuna has challenged a *svabhāvavādin* (essentialist) interpretation of Gautama's teachings by the Theravādins, the Sarvastivādins and possibly the Sautrāntikavādins on their understanding of *dharmas* (events) and the Vātsīputrīyavādin view of *pudgala* (person). The question of Nāgārjuna's orthodoxy thus becomes the question of the orthodoxy of these schools and of their commentaries. And Jayatilleke's evidence and arguments are convincing that the distinction between two truths derives from Gautama's remarks in the *suttas* that although he uses words, he is not led astray by them.

Nevetheless, the *svabhāvādin* view has repeatedly been reasserted in the history of Buddhism. The Pudgalavādins assigned *svabhāva* to the "person." As philosophically inconsistent with most early canons as such a move appears, the school cited *sūtra* sources for their interpretation and their arguments could not have been utterly devoid of merit as they survived for seven hundred years. Further, the Theravādins assigned *svabhāva* to *dharmas*, which is, as shown above, inconsistent with the extinction of suffering, yet they are the only school of the original eighteen that still flourishes today, and they are widely respected as propagating most closely the original teachings of Gautama. The Sarvāstivādins also assigned *svabhāva* to *dharmas* and a number of modern scholars of Buddhism have assigned *svabhāva* to *śūnyatā*.

That Buddhism has repeatedly been open to this kind of interpretation makes the question of orthodoxy, though always an interesting debate, moot in the final analysis. All that is urged is that Nāgārjuna is as justified in his claim to orthodoxy as the Theravāda

commentaries are. That Buddhism frequently gives rise to *svabhāvavādin* interpretations indicates that a strand of essentialism must be present if not in the *sūtras* then in ordinary language. It is possibly an impossible task to describe a changing reality in words because they inevitably make it appear fixed and unchanging. In so far as *svabhāva* (essentialism) is assumed, we may ask of anything "What is it?" In so far as change is assumed, we may ask "Is the change sudden or gradual?" As amply demonstrated by Nāgārjuna, it makes no sense to reverse the questions, to ask of change "What is it?" or to ask of *svabhāva* "How does it change?" To describe the domain of becoming in essentialist language leads to contradiction and incommensurability. To describe becoming in nonessentialist language leads to paradox.

Distinguishing between *saṃvṛtisatya* (conventional truth) and *paramārthasatya* (higher truth) enabled Nāgārjuna to affirm not only the *Buddha Dharma* and the ordinary everyday world, it also enabled him to affirm the describability of the *Buddha Dharma* and the ordinary, everyday world. Thus it would not be accurate in interpreting Nāgārjuna to say that *dharmas* (events) are empty. They are empty of ultimately true descriptions because they are empty of existence per se (*asti*), but they they are not empty of becoming but, indeed, are becoming (*pratītya samutpāda*). However, any description of becoming (arising and ceasing) taken literally is incoherent, but can be loosely described as an open-ended process. Thus translating "*śūnyatā*" as "openness" is preferred.

Notes

1. *MK* XXIV, 18.

2. *Majjhima Nikāya* III, 293f in Rune E. A. Johansson, *Pāli Buddhist Texts*, London, Curzon Press Ltd., 1977, 104. Text: *Ekamantaṃ nisinnaṃ kho āyasmantaṃ Sāriputtaṃ Bhagavā etad avoca: Vippasannāni kho te, Sāriputta, indriyāni parisuddho chavivaṇṇo pariyodāto. Katamena tvaṃ, Sāriputta, vihārena etarahi bahulaṃ viharasīti? Suññatāvihārena kho ahaṃ, bhante, etarahi bahulaṃ viharāmīti. Sādhu, sādhu, Sāriputta. Mahāpurisavihārena kira tvaṃ, Sāriputta, etarahi bahulaṃ viharasi.*

Mahāpurisavihāro h'esa, Sāriputta, yaditaṃ suññatā.

3. *Aṅguttara Nikāya* V, 301 in Rune E. A. Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvāṇa*, London, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1969, 34.

4. *Saṃyukta Nikāya* IV, 360 in Rune E. A. Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvāṇa*, 34. Text: *Suññato samādhi animitto samādhi appaṇihito.*

5. *Majjhima Nikāya* III, 3 in Rune E. A. Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvāṇa*, 34. Text: *Ayaṃ kho pan', Ānanda, vihāro Tathāgatena abhisambuddho, yadidaṃ sabbanimittānaṃ amanasikārā ajjhattaṃ suññataṃ upasampajja viharituṃ.*

6. *Dīgha Nikāya* I, 183 in Rune E. A. Johansson, *Pāli Buddhist Texts*, 99-100.

7. *Therīgāthā* 46 in Rune E. A. Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvāṇa*, 36.

8. *Majjhima Nikāya* III, 104-8 in Rune E. A. Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvāṇa*, 35. Text: *Iti yaṃ hi kho tattha na hoti, tena taṃ suññaṃ samanupassati,*

9. *Majjhima Nikāya* III, 104-8 in Rune E. A. Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvāṇa*, 35. Johansson's translation. Text: *suññam idaṃ saññāgataṃ kāmāsavenāti pajānāti suññam idam saññāgataṃ bhavāsavenāti pajānāti suññam idaṃ saññāgataṃ avijjāsavenāti pajānāti. Atthi c'ev 'idaṃ asuññataṃ, yadidaṃ imam eva kāyaṃ paṭicca saḷāyatanikaṃ jīvitapaccayā ti.*

10. Rune E. A. Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvāṇa*, 37.

11. *Saṃyutta Nikāya* IV, 86 presents one of the many variations of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* chain. Text:

Paṭicca samuppāda anuloma:

avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā/
saṅkhārā paccayā viññānaṃ/
viññāna paccayā nāma-rūpaṃ
nāma-rūpa paccayā salāyatanaṃ/
salāyatana paccayā phasso/
phassa paccayā vedanā/
vedanā paccayā taṇhā/
taṇhā paccayā upādānaṃ/
upādāna paccayā bhavo/
bhava paccayā jāti
jāti paccayā jarā-maraṇaṃ soka-parideva dukkha domanassupāyāsā sambhavanti/
evame-tassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti//

paṭiloma:

avijjāya-tveva asesa virāga-nirodhā sankhāra-nirodho/
saṅkkāra-nirodha viññāna-nirodho/
viññāna-nirodha nāmarūpa-nirodho/
nāma-rūpa-nirodha salāyatana-nirodho/
salāyatana-nirodha phassa-nirodho/
phassa-nirodha vedanā nirodho/

vedanā-nirodha taṇhā nirodho/
taṇhā-nirodha upādāna-nirodho/
upādāna-nirodha bhava nirodho/
bhava-nirodha jāti-nirodho/
jāti-nirodha jarā-maraṇaṃ soka-parideva dukkha
domanassupāyāsā nirujjhanti/
evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandassa nirodho hoti//

12. Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1899, 1085, from textual analysis, defines "*śūnyatā*" (feminine noun) as:

Rāmāyaṇa: emptiness, loneliness, desolateness
Suśruta and *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha*: absence of mind, distraction
Dhūrtasamāgama: vacancy of gaze
Cānakya and *Kumārasambhava*: (end of cpd) absence of, want of
Śiśupālavadha and Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha: nothingness, nonexistence, nonreality, illusory nature (of all worldly phenomena)

"*śūnya*" (adjective) as:

Brāhmaṇas, etc.: empty, void (with vajin, a riderless horse; with rajya, a kingless kingdom), hollow, barren, desolate, deserted
Mahābhārata, Kavya lit., etc.: empty, vacant (as a look or stare), absent, absent-minded, having no certain object or aim, distracted
Rāmāyaṇa and *Bhāgavata Purāṇas*: wholly alone or solitary, having no friends or companions
Mahābhārata and *Kathāsaritsāgara*: empty, possessing nothing, wholly destitute
Kāvya lit., Kathāsaritsāgara, Purāṇas and *Sarvadarśana*: void of, free from, destitute of (ins. or comp.), wanting, lacking
Kāvya and *Pañcatantra*: nonexistence, absent, missing
Rāmāyaṇa, Rājataramgiṇī and *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha*: vain, idle, unreal, nonsensical
Śakuntalā and Ratnāvalī: void of results, ineffectual
Bhāvaprakāśa: free from sensitiveness or sensation (said of the skin), insensible
Monier-Williams 1st Ed. *Dictionary*: bare, naked, guileless, innocent, indifferent

"*sūnyā*" (feminine noun) as:

Lexicographers: a hollow reed, a barren woman, Cactus Indicus, *malī* (for *nalī*?)

"*śūnya*" (neuter noun) as:

Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, etc.: a void, vacuum, empty or deserted place, desert (*śūnye*, in a lonely place)
Monier-Williams, *Indian Wisdom and Buddhism*: in philosophy, vacuity, nonentity, absolute non-existence (especially with Buddhists), name of *Brahma.*
Bṛhat Saṃhitā and Gaṇitadhyāya (by Varāhamithira): (in arithmetic)

nought, a cypher
Lexicographers: space, heaven, atmosphere, a particular phenomenon in the sky, 1085.
13. *MK* I *maṅgalam.*
14. *MK* XXI, 1 and 2.
15. *MK* XXIV, 19. Text:
apratītya samutpanno dharmaḥ kaścin na vidyate/
yasmāt tasmād aśūnyo 'hi dharmaḥ kaścin na vidyate//
16. *Śūnyatāsaptatikārikā* 7 in Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 36-37. Tibetan Text:
/geig med par ni maṅ po daṅ//maṅ po med par geig mi 'jug/
/de phyir rten ciṅ 'brel 'byun ba'i// dṅos po mtshan ma med pa yin/
/geig me par ni maṅ po daṅ//maṅ po med par geig mi 'jug/
/de phyir brten nas dṅos po rnams//byuṅ ba mtshan ma med pa yin/
17. *Śūnyatāsaptatikārikā* 13 in Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 40-41. Tibetan Text:
/pha ni bu min bu pha min//de gñis phan tshun med min la//de gñis cig car yaṅ min ltar//yan lag bcu gñis de b'zin no/
/pha bu ma yin bu pha min//de gñis phan tshun med min la/
/de gñis cig car yaṅ min ltar//yan lag bcu gñis de b'zin no/
18. *Śūnyatāsaptatikārikā* 50 in Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 56-57. Tibetan Text:
/gaṅ tshe nam yaṅ kha dog daṅ//dbyibs dag tha dad ñid med pas/
/de dag tha dad 'dzin yod min/ /gzugs de geig tu'aṅ grags pa min/
/gaṅ tshe nam yaṅ kha dog dbyibs//tha dad ñid ni yod ma yin/
/tha dad geig tu 'dzin pa med//de gñis gzugs su grags phyir ro/
19. *MK* XIV, 5 and 6.
20. *MK* I, 3.
21. *MK* XV, 2 and *MK* XXIV, 16-33. Also see Richard H. Jones, "The Nature and Function of Nāgārjuna's Arguments," *Philosophy East and West* XXIII, no. 4, Oct. 1978, 488 and Bimal K. Matilal, *Epistemology, Logic and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis*, The Hague, Mouton, 1971, 148.
22. *MK* XII, 4-5.
23. *MK* XII, 9.
24. *Vigrahavyvartinī* 21 and 22 in Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 79. Text:
hetupratyayasāmagryaṃ ca pṛthak cāpi madvaco na yadi/
nanu śūnyatvaṃ siddhaṃ bhāvānām asvabhāvatvāt//
yaś ca pratītyabhāvo bhāvānāṃ śūnyateti sā proktā/
yaś pratītyabhāvo bhavati hi tasyābhāvatvam//
25. *MK* XV, 7.
26. *MK* XV, 8-11.
27. Richard Robinson, *The Buddhist Experience*, suggests the work, though late, is "dramatically authentic" and probably as accurate "as Aśvaghoṣa could make it with the data and concepts at his disposal," p. 19. A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, recounts that legends date the author as

contemporaneous with Kaniṣka, but defers to Johnston's more convincing date of 50 years earlier, 338-40. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita*, Lahore University of the Punjab, 1936, relying on an impressive array of evidence from Indian, Chinese, and paleographic sources, places the earliest possible date at 50 B.C.E. and the latest at 100 C.E., with a preference for the first half of the first century, xiii-xvii.

28. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita*, XII, 69, 137. Text:
śrutaṃ jñānam idaṃ sūkṣmaṃ parataḥ parataḥ śivam/
kṣetrajñasyāparityāgād avaimy etad anaiṣṭhikam//

29. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita* XII, 69, with the aid of Tibetan and Chinese recensions, translates this partly inscrutable verse as "I have listened to this doctrine of yours, which grows more subtile [sic] and auspicious in its successive stages, but I consider it not to lead to final beatitude, since the field-knower is not abandoned." 178.

30. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita* XII, 70, 137. Text:
vikāraprakṛtibhyo hi kṣetrajñaṃ muktam apyaham/
manye prasaṃvadharmāṇaṃ bījadharmāṇam eva ca//

31. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita* XII, 71, 137. Text:
viśuddhyo yadyapi hyātmā nirmukta iti kalpyate/
bhūyaḥ pratyayasadbhāvād amuktaḥ sa bhaviṣyati//

32. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita* XII, 72, 137. Text:
ṛtubhūmyambuvirahād yathā bījaṃ na rohati/
rohati pratyayais tais tais tadyatso 'pi mato mama//

33. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita* XII, 73, 137. Text:
atkarmājñānatṛṣṇānāṃ tyāgānmokṣaś ca kalpyate/
ātyantas tatparityāgaḥ satyātmani na vidyate//
atkarmājñānatṛṣṇānāṃ tyāgānmokṣaś ca kalpyate/
ātyantas tatparityāgaḥ satyātmani na vidyate//

34. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita* XII, 74, 137. Text:
hitvā hitvā atrayam idaṃ viśeṣas tūpalabhyate/
ātmanas tu sthitir yatra tatra sūkṣmam idaṃ atrayam//

35. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita* XII, 75, 137. Text:
sūkṣmatvāccaiva dosānāmavyāpāràcca cetasaḥ/
daurghatvādāyuṣaścaiva mokṣas tu parikalpyate//

36. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita* XII, 76, 137. Text:
āhamkāraparityāgo yaścaisa parikalpyate/
satyātmani parityāgo nāhaṃkārasya vidyate//

37. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita* XII, 77, 138. Text:
saṃkhyādibhir amuktaś ca nirguṇo na bhavatyayam/
tasmād asati nairguṇye nāsya mokṣo 'bhidhīyate//

38. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita* XII, 78, 138. Text:
guṇino hi guṇānāṃ ca vyatireko na vidyate/
rūpoṣṇābhyāṃ virahito na hyagnir upalabhyate//

39. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita* XII, 82, 138. Text:
parataḥ paratastyāgo yasmāt tu guṇavān smṛtaḥ/
tasmāt sarvaparityāgān manye kṛtsnāṃ kṛtārthatām//

40. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita* XIV, 56, 209. Two-thirds of this chapter is no longer extant in Sanskrit and Johnston bases his translation, given on page 66 above, on the Tibetan and Chinese recensions. The account is based on the *Tripiṭaka.*

41. E. H. Johnston, *Buddhacarita* XIV, 7 and 8, 158. Text:
dvitīye tvāgate yame so 'dvitīyaparākramaḥ/
divyaṃ lebhe paraṃ cakṣuḥ sarvacakṣuṣmatām varaḥ//
tatas tena sa divyena pariśuddhena cakṣuṣā/
dadarśa nisvilaṃ lokamādarśa iva nirmale//

42. E. H. Johnston translates *Buddhacarita* XIV, 8, 204, differently, but with a similar meaning: "Then with that completely purified divine eyesight he beheld the entire world, as it were in a spotless mirror."

43. *Majjhima Nikāya* V, 2ff., in Rune E. A. Johansson, *Pāli Buddhist Texts*, Text: *Samāhitassa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ 'yathābhūtaṃ jānāmi passāmī' ti. Dhammatā esa, bhikkhave, yaṃ samāhito yathābhūtaṃ jānāti passati*, 53. Monks, for one who is concentrated, there is no need for the intent "May I see and understand as it really is." It is natural [in the nature of things], Monks, that one who is concentrated sees and understands as it really is.

44. R. C. Pandeya, *Indian Studies in Philosophy*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1977, 105.

45. The *Buddhacarita* continues that the Buddha's compassion waxed and he saw beings passing away and being reborn as their actions were good or evil, i.e., the law of *karman*. Aśvaghoṣa goes on to describe in vivid poetry the various heavens and hells. However, the doctrine in Buddhism does not have to be understood metaphysically as asserting life before birth and after death. Indeed, *karman* so understood does not make sense in the Buddhist context. The distinction between two truths is helpful in this case. That is, the concepts of *karman* and rebirth make sense within one lifetime under an interpretation handed down orally from teacher to student over centuries and finally been committed to writing by Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, *Toward the Truth*, ed. Donald K. Swearer, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1972 and quoted in John H. Hick, *Death and Eternal Life*, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1976, 359. Buddhadasa says; "In *Dhamma* language the word ["birth"] refers to the birth of the sense of "I" and "me" anytime it arises in the mind. In this sense, the ordinary person is born very often, time and time again. A more developed person is born less frequently; a person well advanced in practice is born less frequently still, and ultimately ceases being reborn altogether. Each arising in the mind of the idea of "I" in one form or another is called a birth. From this point of view, birth takes place many times over in a single day. As soon as anyone thinks like an animal, he is born as an animal at that same moment. To think as a human being is to be born a human being. To think like a celestial being is to be born a celestial being. . . . Thus birth means, in *Dhamma* language, the arising of the idea of "I" and "me," and not, as in everyday language, physical birth from the mother's womb." That

this is a plausible interpretation of *karman* in Buddhism is clear to anyone who has practiced Buddhist meditation and watched the idea 'I' arise.

46. *MK* I, 2.

47. *MK* I, 3.

48. David Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna*, p. 21-24ff.

49. R. C. Pandeya, "Mādhyamika Philosophy, A New Approach," in *Indian Studies in Philosophy*, 60-62, argues that the concept of impermanence (*anitya*) was explained by Sautrāntikas as momentariness (*kṣaṇa*) which was in turn based on another new concept, efficiency, or causal efficacy (*arthakriyā kāritva*). They argued that an event, by nature impermanent, appears permanent. That is the real nature (*svalakṣaṇa*) of an event is momentary, but it appears (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) permanent because change occurs, so to speak, "below the surface" as a rearrangement of component elements or "atoms." Permanence is an appearance while momentariness is real. Thus reality is given only in the present. However, how could a composite or conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) event be recognized if each of its component parts is momentary and thus entirely new each moment? It was argued that the identity of the conditioned event was "rooted in an unbroken series of similar though discrete particular momentary realities (*kṣaṇa saṃtāna*)." In other words, *pratītya samutpāda*. The preceding moment was not the cause of this one in the *satkāryavāda* sense of the being identical with the effect, because then change would not be accounted for. And if there is no change, why look for a cause of change? The conditioned event was also not a cause in the *asatkāryavāda* sense of being completely different from the effect. If cause and effect are not alike, then the similarity between cause and effect is not explained. The Sautrāntika solution was that causality is the appearance of momentary realities conditioned or conjoined with other momentary realities. In other words, numerous *dharmas* appear simultaneously. Given Gautama's original formula for causation, *asmin sati idam bhavati* (this being, that arises, i.e., the cause must preceed the effect), this solution posed problems for orthodoxy. But the Sautrāntika view was that the very momentariness of the event made it real. Because the event is real, it is efficacious, i.e., it has an impact on the mind of a perceiver in that it appears. If an event does not appear, it cannot be real (*uccheda*). "The appearance is not of something (*satkārya*) nor is it out of nothing (*asatkārya*). It is because of the force (*saṃskāra*)" of conditioning, its conjunction with other events (*saṃskṛta*). Thus momentary events are efficacious enough to appear, but they do not produce other momentary events.

50. *MK* I, 4. Louis de la Vallée Poussin, *Mūlamadhyamikakārikās de Nāgārjuna, avec la Prasannapadā Commentaire de Candrakīrti*, Osnabrück, Biblio Verlag, 1970, 81 reads "*santyatu*," a likely misprint for "*santyuta*."

51. *MK* I, 1.

52. Ninian R. Smart, *Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy*,

New Jersey, Humanities Press, 1964, 182.

53. *MK* I, 8.
54. *MK* I, 13.
55. *MK* I, 11.
56. *MK* I, 12.
57. *MK* I, 14.
58. *MK* I, 7.
59. *MK* I, 5.
60. *MK* I, 9.
61. *MK* I, 6.
62. *MK* I, 10.
63. Charles Rockwell Lanman, *A Sanskrit Reader*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1884, calls the description of Damayantī as "*sumadhyamā, rūpa, tejas, yaśas, śrī, sāubhāgya,*" a "reprehensible tautology", 305.
64. *MK* VIII, 4, 5 and 6.
65. *MK* V, 8.
66. *MK* X, 16.
67. *MK* VII, 34.
68. *MK* XVIII, 4 and 5.
69. *MK* XVII, 31-33.
70. *MK* XXIII, 8.
71. *MK* XV, 11.
72. *MK* XXII, 16.
73. *MK* XXIV, 1.
74. *MK* XXIV, 2-6.
75. *MK* XXIV, 7.
76. *MK* XXIV, 8 and 9.
77. *MK* XXIV, 10.
78. *MK* XXIV, 14.
79. *MK* XXIV, 15-17.
80. *MK* XXIV, 20.
81. *MK* XXIV, 21.
82. *MK* XXIV, 22-24.
83. *MK* XXIV, 26.
84. *MK* XXIV, 27-30.
85. *MK* XXIV, 31.
86. *MK* XXIV, 32.
87. David Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna*, translates this verse as follows: "Whosoever is by self-nature unenlightened, even though he were to contend with enlightenment, would not attain enlightenment through a career of a *bodhisattva*." He interprets the verse as though uttered by Nāgārjuna rather than the opponent, saying: "This is the one and only time Nāgārjuna, the so-called patron of Mahāyāna, refers to the way (*carya*) of a *bodhisattva*. Yet the kind of criticism he is presenting here offers no consolation to those who accept certain doctrines of popular Mahāyāna.

Any substantialist theory mitigates against the career of a *bodhisattva*," 348. Kalupahana's translation and interpretation are incorrect in that he has left out a significant "*te*." If the term "*bodhisattva*" was used only by the Mahāyāna, its use in this verse would confirm the evidence and arguments above that Nāgārjuna was a Mahāyānist. However, the term "*bodhisattva*" was used by the Sarvāstivādins, early offshoots of the Sthaviravāda who practiced a *bodhisattva* vow of six perfections (*pāramitās*), as well as by three later offshoots of the Mahāsaṃghikas: the Caitakas, the Apara Śailas, and the Uttara Śailas, whose *bodhisattvas* followed ten stages (*bhūmi*) leading to buddhahood (*buddhatva*). See Chap. II, 22 and 27n., 56. The verse above says whoever is not a *buddha* is striving after *bodhi*, not *buddhatva*. In the context of the previous verse and the chapter as a whole, it appears likely that Nāgārjuna's opponent was a Sarvāstivādin.

88. *MK* XXIV, 36.

89. *MK* XXIV, 37 and 38.

90. *MK* XXIV, 39 and 40.

91. *MK* XXIV, 18.

92. *MK* VIII, 12.

93. *MK* XXIV, 19.

94. *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 265 in Rune E. A. Johansson, *Pāli Buddhist Texts*, 19.

95. *MK* XVIII, 7.

96. *Dīgha Nikāya* III, 211, in A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 118. See also *Saṃyukta Nikāya* II, 11f., and II, 99f.

97. *Saṃyukta Nikāya* II, 101, in A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 118.

98. *Saṃyukta Nikāya* II, 13, in A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 119.

99. *Saṃyukta Nikāya* I, 135, in Rune E. A. Johansson, *Pāli Buddhist Texts*, 34-35. Text: *Kinnu satto ti paccesi? Māra, diṭṭhigataṃ nu te. Suddhasankhārapuñjo yaṃ, nayidha sattūpalabbhati.Yathā hi angasambhārā hoti saddo ratho iti. Evaṃ khandhesu santesu hoti satto ti sammuti.*

100. Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982, 71-78.

101. Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons*, 160-62.

102. *Saṃyukta Nikāya* III, 25f., in Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons*, 164-65 and 289 note 24. Collins remarks that *bhārahāra* has often been translated as "bearer of the burden" which is impossible since *hāra* in both Pāli and Sanskrit is an adjective meaning "carrying" or, as used here, a noun meaning "the act of carrying," 165.

103. *Kathāvatthu* I, 76, in Collins, *Selfless Persons*, 286, note 16.

104. K. N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1963, 361 and 366.

105. *Aṅguttara Nikāya* I, 60, in K. N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 361. Text: *Dve'me Tathāgataṃ abbhācikkhanti. Katama dve? Yo ca neyyatthaṃ suttantaṃ nītattho suttanto ti dīpeti; yo ca nīyatthaṃ suttantaṃ neyyattho suttanto ti dīpeti.*

106. *Aṅguttara Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā* (*Manorathapūraṇī*) II, 118 in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 362. (His translation has one small error, corrected above because clearly unintended; the second *anicca* should read "impermanent" rather than "permanent.") Text: *Ekapuggalo, bhikkhave, dve'me bhikkhave puggalā, tayo'me bhikkhave puggalā . . . ti evarūpo suttanto neyyattho nāma. Ettha hi kiñcāpi sammāsambuddhena ekapuggalo bhikkhave ti ādi vuttaṃ, paramatthato pana puggalo nāma natthī ti evaṃ assa attho netabbo va hoti. Ayam pana attano bālataya nītattho ayaṃ suttanto: paramatthato hi puggale asati, na Tathāgato ekapuggalo bhikhave ti ādīni vadeyya. Yasmā pana tena vuttaṃ, tasmā paramatthato atthi puggalo ti ganhanto taṃ neyyatthaṃ suttantaṃ nītattho suttanto ti dīpeti. Nītatthan ti aniccaṃ dukkhaṃ anattā ti evaṃ kathitattham. Ettha hi aniccam eva dukkham eva anattā yevā ti attho. Ayam pana attano bālataya neyyattho ayaṃ suttanto attham assa āharissamīti niccaṃ nāma atthi sukhaṃ nāma atthi, attā nama atthī ti gaṇhanto nītatthaṃ suttantaṃ neyyattho suttanto tī dīpeti nāma.* *"*paramattha*" appears in this commentary for *nītattha* discourse (not truth), but would be better translated as "higher," not "absolute."

107. *Dīgha Nikāya* I, 202, in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 320 and 362. Text: *Itimā . . . loka samaññā lokaniruttiyo lokavohārā lokapaññattiyo yāhi Tathāgato voharati aparāmasan ti'*.

108. *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 40, in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 319. Text: *n'eso aham asmi, na m'eso attā.*

109. *Dīgha Nikāya* I, 200, in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 320-21. Text: *Ahos'āhaṃ atī Knowledge*, 319. Text: *n'eso aham asmi, na m'eso attā.tam addhānaṃ nāhaṃ nāhosiṃ, bhavissām'āhaṃ anāgatam addhānaṃ nāhaṃ na bhavissāmi, atthāhaṃ etarahi nāhaṃ natthī ti*. Jayatilleke rebuts Prof. Jaini's translation of "paññatti" in the *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta* as "designations or concepts recognized as unreal in themselves nevertheless used in common parlance" because the term "*dukkha-paññatti*" is used in *Saṃyukta Nikāya* I, 39, and *dukkha* is certainly not considered unreal in the *suttas*. In analyzing the content of the *Poṭṭhapāda*, Jayatilleke concludes that "milk," "curds," "butter," "ghee," etc., are not intended by the author to indicate "mere words that do not denote anything real [as Jaini says] but that in the first place we should not overstep convention by calling what comes to be called (*saṅkham gacchati*) "curds" by the names "milk," "butter," etc., and secondly assume that "milk" or "butter" is in some mysterious way present as an entity in "curds" so that each of these terms, like the term "*ātman*" (*atta*), denotes an entity that persists in some mysterious fashion without being perceived." Lastly, Jayatilleke points out that the word "merely" in Jaini's translation does not occur in the original text.

110. *Aṅguttara Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā* (*Manorathapūraṇī*) I, 94, in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 363. Text: *Puggalo ti sammutikathā, na paramatthakathā. Buddhassa hi bhagavato duvidhā desanā: sammutidesanā paramatthadesanā cāti. Tattha puggalo satto . . .*

ti evarūpā sammutidesanā. Aniccaṃ dukkhaṃ anattā khandhā . . . ti evarūpā paramattha desanā.

111. Kathāvatthu Aṭṭhakathā (*Kathāvatthuppakaraṇaṭṭhakathā*) in Jayaātilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 363. The ending for the same verse in *Manorathapūraṇī* I, 95, is "*dhammānam bhūtalakkhaṇaṃ.*" Text:
Duve saccāni akkhāsi Sambuddho vadatam varo sammutiṃ paramatthañ ca tatiyaṃ n'ūpalabbhati sanketavacanaṃ saccam lokasammutikāraṇam paramatthavacanaṃ saccaṃ; dhammānaṃ tathalakkhaṇaṃ.

112. *MK* I, *maṅgalam* and XXIV, 9 and 10.

113. *Suttanipāta* 884 in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 353 and 364. Text: *ekaṃ hi saccaṃ na dutīyam atthi.*

114. *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, U. Wogihara, ed., Tokyo, 1930-36, 292 in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 364, note 2. Text: *avitathārtheṇa tāvad ekam eva satyaṃ na dvitīyam.* And *dvividhaṃ satyam saṃvṛtisatyaṃ paramārthasatyañ ca.*

115. *Aṅguttara Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā* (*Manorathapūraṇī*) I, 94, in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 364-65. Text: *Bhagavā ye sammutivasena desanaṃ sutvā atthaṃ paṭivijjhitvā mohaṃ pahāya visesaṃ adigantuṃ samatthā tesaṃ sammutidesanaṃ deseti. Ye pana paramatthavasena desanaṃ sutvā atthaṃ paṭivijjhitvā mohaṃ pahāya visesaṃ adhigantuṃ sammathā tesaṃ paramatthadesanaṃ deseti. Tatrāyam upamā: yathā hi desabhāsakusalo tiṇṇaṃ vedānaṃ atthasamvaṇṇako ācariyo ye damilabhāsāya vutte atthaṃ jānanti tesaṃ damilabhāsāya ācikkhati, ye āndharabhāsādisu aññatarāya tesaṃ tāya bhāsāya . . . .*

116. *Kathāvatthuppakaraṇaṭṭhakathā* in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 365. Text: *Te sammutikathaṃ kathentā pi saccaṃ eva sabhāvam eva amusā 'va kathenti. Paramatthakathaṃ kathentā pi saccaṃ eva sabhāvam eva amusā 'va kathenti.* The evidence given above by Jayatilleke supports his contention that modern scholars such as Sayadaw have misconstrued the two truths distinction, saying that *samutisacca* is "just an erroneous view" and "according to Sayadaw, what is true according to conventional truth, i.e., 'a person exists' (to take his his own example) is false according to ultimate truth." Jayatilleke compares this to the Jain doctrine of standpoints where p is true from standpoint x but false from standpoint y: "But this does not represent the position of the *Nikāyas* where it would be true to say 'a person exists in the present' (see above) so long as one does not mean by 'person' a substance enduring in time. Convention requires that I use such words as 'I' or 'person' but so long as one is not misled by their implications (of a perduring entity) the statement is true." He also rebuts Nyānātiloka's interpretation that the *suttas* are in philosophically incorrect language unlike the *Abhidhamma* on the grounds that it ignores the distinction between *nītattha* and *neyyattha suttas* as well as the occurance of *puggalapaññatti* in the *Abhidhamma*, 365-66.

117. *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 70, in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 406. Text: *sattānāṃ nānādhimuttikataṃ yathābhūtam pajānāti.*

118. Michael Pye, *Skillful Means*, London, Duckworth Ltd., 1978, 1.

119. *Yuktiṣaṣṭikākārikā* 33 in Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 110. Tibetan Text: *mamety aham iti proktaṃ yathā kāryavaśāj jinaiḥ/*
tathā kāryavaśāt proktāḥ skandhāyatanadhātavaḥ//

120. *Yuktiṣaṣṭikākārikā* 21 in Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 108. Tibetan Text: */de ltar ci yaṅ skye ba med//ci yaṅ 'gag par mi 'gyur ro/*
/skye ba daṅ ni 'jig pa'i lam//dgos pa'i don du bstan pa 'o/

121. Richard H. Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in India and China*, draws a distinction between the symbol system and the fact system, 49.

122. *MK* XXIV, 10.

123. *MK* XXV, 1.

124. *MK* XXV, 2.

125. *MK* XXV, 3.

126. *MK* XXV, 4.

127. *MK* XXV, 5.

128. Theodore Stcherbatsky, *The Central Conception of Buddhism*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1923, 106. Unfortunately Stcherbatsky based his analysis of Buddhist *dharma* theory on the Sarvāstivāda account.

129. *MK* XXV, 6. "*Bhāva*" means a being, an existent, not existence.

130. *MK* XXV, 7.

131. *MK* XXV, 8.

132. *MK* XXV, 9.

133. *MK* XV, 7. *Asti*, existence, implies *bhāva*, a being who exists. But how could such a being be described as occuring or changing?

134. *MK* XV, 10.

135. *MK* XXV, 10.

136. *MK* XXV, 15.

137. *MK* XXV, 11 and 12.

138. *MK* XXV, 13.

139. *MK* XXV, 14.

140. *MK* XXV, 16.

141. *MK* XXV, 17-18.

142. *MK* XXV, 19.

143. *MK* XXIV, 10.

144. *MK* XXV, 20.

145. Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, in his "synthetic survey (*saṃkṣepa*) of the religious and philosophical pursuasions of Nāgārjuna" says that " . . . epistemologically, the ultimate truth (*tattva*) is the object of a cognition without an object (*advayajñāna*) . . .," 18-19. But in the entire corpus of texts Lindtner argues can be authentically ascribed to Nāgārjuna, only one uses the term *advaya* (nondual), the *Bodhicittavivaraṇa*. That alone would justify hesitation in ascribing a nondual philosophy to Nāgārjuna. *Bodhicittavivaraṇa*, extant in Tibetan and some fragments in

Sanskrit, is a critique of Vijñānavāda in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and so again raises the issue as to whether there was an early, possibly oral version of the *Laṅkā* with which Nāgārjuna was familiar. It was argued above that since the *Laṅkā* is a later text, it is more plausible that it is quoting the *MK* than vice versa. In any case, Lindtner argues that though the text is not mentioned by Buddhapālita or Candrakīrti, it is a basic authority for a late work by Bhāvaviveka and is mentioned by others, especially Asvabhāva and Śāntarakṣita, and it is similar in style to the *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, *Ratnāvalī*, and *Catuḥstava*. Yet the text is remarkably different from others in Lindtner's category of "authentic" works by Nāgārjuna in its praise not of Buddha, *buddhas* or *jinas*, but of Samantabhadra, a *bodhisattva* who is connected with a later addition (probably after the time of Nāgārjuna) of the *Lotus Sūtra*, a text hostile to early Buddhism. The *Laṅkāvatāra* uses the term "*advaya*" extensively, but its occurrence in only one work by Nāgārjuna, and a reasonably questionable work at that, does not merit interpreting his epistemology as nondual. In any case, the point above is that Vedānta is *advaita* (nondualism) which is not the same as *advaya* (nondual), even if Nāgārjuna did use the term, since *paramārthasatya* [higher truth] is nothing other than a caveat about *saṃvṛtisatya*. There is nothing that exists there that could then be nondifferent from convention. See Frederick Streng, *Emptiness, A Study in Religious Meaning*, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1967.

146. *MK* XXII, 11.

147. Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1953, 358.

148. *MK* XVI, 10.

149. Irving Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, New York, MacMillan Co., 1961, 266-67 and 283.

150. The proof, using ≡ as a sign for equivalence, a horseshoe ⊃ for the "if/then," hypothetical, a dot • for the conjunction "and", a v for the disjunction "or" and a tilde ~ for the negation "not" in modern logic, is:

1. $n \equiv ś$ (*nirvāṇa* is equivalent to *śūnyatā*)	
2. $s \equiv ś$ (*saṃsāra* is equivalent to *śūnyatā*)	
3. $(n \supset ś) \bullet (ś \supset n)$ from	1, by Equivalence
4. $(s \supset ś) \bullet (ś \supset s)$	2, Equiv.
5. $n \supset ś$	3, Simplification
6. $ś \supset s$	4, Simp.
7. $n \supset s$	3, 4 Hypothetical Syllogism
8. $ś \supset n$	3, Simp.
9. $s \supset ś$	4, Simp.
10. $\sim n \supset \sim ś$	7, Transformation
11. $\sim ś \supset \sim s$	9, Trans.
12. $\sim n \supset \sim s$	10, 11, H. S.
13. $s \supset n$	12, Trans.
14. $(n \supset s) \bullet (s \supset n)$	7, 13, Conjunction
∴ 15. $n \equiv s$	14, Equiv.

151. *MK* XVI, 9.
152. *MK* XVI, 6-8.
153. *MK* XXII, 14.
154. *MK* V, 8.
155. *MK* XVIII, 5.
156. *MK* XXVI, 10.
157. *MK* XXVI, 11 and 12.
158. *MK* XXV, 24.
159. *MK* IV, 8.
160. *MK* XIII, 3.
161. *MK* IV, 9.
162. *MK* V, 7. That is, "existence" is not a predicate.
163. *MK* XXII, 10.
164. *MK* XXII, 11.
165. *MK* X, 9-11.
166. *MK* X, 12.
167. *MK* XXIII, 8-13.
168. *MK* XIII, 7, and *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* I, 16 and XXIII, 2.
169. *MK* XIII, 8.
170. *MK* XXIV, 7.
171. *MK* XXIV, 11.
172. *MK* XXIV, 12.

173. *Vigrahavyāvartinī* 24 in Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 79 and K. Bhattacharya, E. H. Johnston and A. Kunst, *The Dialectical Method of Nāgārjuna* (*Vigrahavyāvartinī*), Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1978, 26. Text: *na svābhāvikam etadvākyaṃ tasmān na vādahānir me/*
nāsti ca vaiṣamikatvaṃ viśeṣahetuś ca na nigadyaḥ//

174. *Vigrahavyāvartinī* 29 in Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 80, K. Bhattacharya, E. H. Johnston, and A. Kunst, *Dialectical Method*, 29. Text:
yadi *kācana pratijñā syān me tata eṣa me bhaved dosaḥ/*
nāsti ca mama pratijñā tasmān naivāsti me doṣaḥ//

175. *Vigrahavyāvartinī* 57 in Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 84, K. Bhattacharya, E. H. Johnston, and A. Kunst, *Dialectical Method*, 44. Text:
yaḥ sadbhūtaṃ nāmātra brūyāt sasvabhāva ity evam/
bhavatā prativaktavyo nāma brūmaś ca na vayaṃ sat//

176. *Lokātītastava* 14 in Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 132.

177. *MK* XV, 10.

178. *MK* XVIII, 7.

179. *MK* XVIII, 8.

180. *Saṃyukta Nikāya* IV, 298-99 and *Kathāvatthu* 159 in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 334.

181. See Jayatilleke's discussion of A. J. Bahm, "Does Sevenfold Predication Equal Four-Cornered Negation Reversed" in *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 337. Technically, in Aristotelian logic, the contrary of (All S is P) is (No S is P) and the contradiction of it is (Some S is not P). Two propositions are contraries when they cannot both be true, though

they might both be false. For example, where the word "this" refers to exactly the same thing, the statements "This is black" and "This is white" cannot be jointly true, but both might be false. "This" could be red. The contradiction of "This is black" is "This is not black." It is clear that both the *Nikāyas* and Nāgārjuna accept the law of noncontradiction, but the *MK* uses it to reject what Aristotelian logic would call contraries. That is, Nāgārjuna holds that (No S is P) is the contradiction, not contrary of (All S is P). This use is valid provided another proposition is assumed, namely "If this is not black, then it is white." Propositions of this form are clearly assumed by Nāgārjuna "If the world is not finite, then it is infinite." It is a form of the law of the excluded middle accepted by the *Nikāyas* and Nāgarjuna. Both oppose existentially quantified contraries in the both/and position (Some parts are black) and (Some parts are white). Though contraries are considered contradictions by Nāgārjuna, the both/and and the neither/nor positions are not contradictions in the *Nikāyas* because they are existentially quantified, as in Aristotelian logic. The *MK*, however, implicitly denies that existential quantification removes contradiction because of the problem of *svabhāva*. See Irving Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, 142-58 and 271-73.

182. *MK* VIII, 7. *MK* XXV, 14, is also used as a contradiction.

183. *Dīgha Nikāya* I, 22, 23, in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 340-41.

184. *MK* XXVII, 25. Also See *MK* XX.

185. *MK* XXVII, 28. $[(\exists x)Px \bullet (\exists x){\sim}Px] \equiv [{\sim}(x)\ {\sim}Px \bullet {\sim}(x)Px]$

186. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, says there is no middle between true and false, but the term "middle" is ambiguous, there being no middle in four possible positions, 345, note 2.

187. *Aṅguttara Nikāya* II, 25, in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 345-46. Text: *yam . . . sassamaṇa-brāhmaniyā pajāya . . . diṭṭhaṃ sutaṃ mutaṃ viññātaṃ pattaṃ pariyesitaṃ anuvicaritam manasā taṃ ahaṃ jānāmi . . . Yaṃ . . . diṭṭhaṃ sutaṃ . . . taṃ ahaṃ na jānāmī ti vadeyyam taṃ mama assa musā, taṃ ahaṃ jānāmi na ca jānāmī ti vadeyyaṃ, tam p'assa tādisam eva, taṃ ahaṃ jānāmi na na janāmī ti vadeyyaṃ taṃ mama assa kali.*

188. *MK* II, 8.

189. S. Miyamoto, "The Logic of Relativity as the Common Ground for the Development of the Middle Way" in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 338.

190. *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 341ff., and *Puggalapaññatti* 55ff., in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 342.

191. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 342-43. He calls them contraries, but as shown above, Nāgārjuna is using Aristotelian contraries for contradictions. The point is that the both/and and neither/nor positions are not contradictions because they are existentially quantified, a point also made by Jayatilleke. It may be that Jayatilleke's use of the Aristotelian concept of contraries for the Buddhist concept of contradic-

tion is what leads him to reject Robinson's interesting analysis of the logic of the *catuṣkoṭi*.

192. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, gives an example, but unfortunately, does not say if it is from the canon and if so, from which *sutta*, 345-47.

193. *Dhammasaṇganī*, 583, in Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 355. Text: *ye ca dhammā kiriyā n'eva kusalā na akusalā . . . ime dhamma avyākatā*. In this context, Jayatilleke speculates, admittedly without historical justification, that the *avyākata* were rejected because they were *pratyekasatya* (individual, partial truths). The ten *avyākata* theses were called in the *Udāna* "*pacceka saccas*" (Pāli) and were compared to the utterances of the ten blind men who each touched part of the elephant and mistook his partial truth for the whole truth. A theory of partial truth is not developed in the *Nikāyas*, as it was in Jain literature. It is an intriguing hypothesis that Nāgārjuna was influenced by the idea of *pratyeka satya* in his conception of the higher truth, *paramārthastaya*, but this seems unlikely in that in the Jain theory, conflicting theories are each true from different standpoints or perspectives. Nāgārjuna is sometimes interpreted as having such an idea, that from the perspective of *saṃsāra*, *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are distinct whereas from the perspective of *nirvāṇa*, *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are not distinct. But it has been argued above that Nāgārjuna does not hold that *saṃvṛtisatya* and *paramārthasatya* are contradictory and thus conflicting, but that they are both true. This interpretation, as shown above, accords with the Theravāda commentaries.

194. *MK* XXII, 12.

195. *MK* XXII, 13 and 14.

196. *MK* XII, 1-9:

I. Suffering (x) is Self-caused (S)	$(x)Sx$
II. Suffering is caused by Another, i.e., not Self-Caused	$(x){\sim}Sx$
III. Suffering is partly Self-caused and partly caused by Another	$[(\exists x)Sx \bullet (\exists x){\sim}Sx]$
IV. Suffering is neither Self-caused nor caused by Another i.e., Suffering is uncaused	${\sim}[(\exists x)Sx \bullet (\exists x){\sim}Sx] \equiv$ $[{\sim}(\exists x)Sx \vee {\sim}(\exists x){\sim}Sx]$ ${\sim}[(x)Sx \vee (x){\sim}Sx]$

197. *MK* XII, 10.

198. *MK* XXVII, 29.

199. *MK* XVIII, 10 and 11. In terms of Aristotelian logic, *anekārtham anānārtham* are contraries and the contradiction would be (with *saṃdhi* for *na eka*), "*na ekārtham na nāikārtham*," "neither identical nor not identical." As shown above, Nāgārjuna considers contraries contradictions and is being so interpreted here. The move is valid assuming the law of exclusion, i.e., what is not identical is different.

200. "Neither/nor" is often the negation of "either/or" and would thus be symbolized ${\sim}(P \vee Q)$ which is equivalent to $({\sim}P \bullet {\sim}Q)$, But for Nāgārjuna, "neither/nor" is the negation of "both/and," ${\sim}(P \bullet Q)$, which is

equivalent to ~P v Q). See footnote 185 this chapter and DeMorgan's Theorems, Copi, *Introduction to Logic* (7th Ed.), 274ff.

201. *MK* I, *maṅgalam*.

202. *MK* XVIII, 4.

203. *MK* XXVI, 10.

204. *MK* XXVI, 11.

205. *MK* XXVI, 12.

206. *MK* XVIII, 5.

207. *MK* XVIII, 6.

208. *Yuktiṣaṣṭikākārikā*, 46-48, in Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 114-15. Text:

rāgadveṣodbhavas tīvraduṣṭadṛṣṭiparigrahaḥ/
vivādās tatsamutthāś ca bhāvābhyupagame sati//
sa hetuḥ sarvadṛṣṭīnāṃ kleśotpattir na taṃ vinā/
tasmāt tasmin parijñāte dṛṣṭikleśaparikṣayaḥ//
parijñā tasya keneti pratītyotpādadarśanāt/
pratītya jātaṃ cājātam āha tattvavidāṃ varaḥ//

209. *Yuktiṣaṣṭikākārikā*, 51, in Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 116-117. Lindtner translates this as "By taking any standpoint whatsoever one is attacked by the twisting snakes of the passions (*kleśasarpa*). But those whose mind (*citta*) has no standpoint (*sthāna*) are not caught." I have altered the translation slightly because "standpoint" reflects the Jain view discussed above. The verse seems close to the *Aṣṭa* where *śūnyatā* is like space, there is no place to stand and nothing to grasp. Tibetan Text:

/gaṅ yaṅ ruṅ ba'i gnas rñed nas/ /ñon moṅs sbrul gdug gyo can gyis/
/zin par gyur te gaṅ gi sems/ /gnas med de dag zin mi 'gyur//

210. *MK* XVIII, 9.

211. *MK* VII, 16.

212. *MK* XXVII, 30.

Appendix

Mūlamadhyamakakārikā
by Nāgārjuna

based on

Mūlamadhyamakakārikā (Mādhyamakasūtra) de Nāgārjuna avec la Prasannapadā de Candrakīrti

Louis de La Vallée Poussin, Editor

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with variations [in brackets] from

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J. W. de Jong, Editor

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Mūlamadhyamakakārikā Treatise on the Root of the Middle Way

I
pratyayaparīkṣā
Analysis of Conditions

maṅgalam
Dedication

anirodham anutpādam anucchedam aśāśvatam/
anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirgamam//
yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaṃ prapañcopaśamaṃ śivam/
deśayāmāsa saṃbuddhas taṃ vande vadatāṃ varam//

I greet the best of teachers, that Awakened One,
who taught liberation, the quieting of phenomena,
interdependent origination which is;
nonceasing and nonarising, nonmomentary and nonpermanent,
nonidentical and nondifferent, noncoming and nongoing.

1. *na svato nāpi parato na dvābhyāṃ nāpy ahetutaḥ/*
utpannā jātu vidyante bhāvāḥ kva cana ke cana//

Never, nowhere do any beings occur arisen from themselves,
from others, from both or from no cause.

2. *catvāraḥ pratyayā hetuś cālambanam [hetur ārambaṇam] anantaram/*
tathaivādhipateyaṃ ca pratyayo nāsti pañcamaḥ//

There are only four conditions, namely *hetu* (cause), *alambana* (supporting condition), *anantaram* (contiguous condition) and *adhipati* (dominant condition). There is no fifth condition.

3. *na hi svabhāvo bhāvānāṃ pratyayādiṣu vidyate/*
avidyamāne svabhāve parabhāvo na vidyate//

Indeed, no self-nature (own-being, essence) of beings occurs in the conditions of beings.
Since self-nature is not present, other nature does not occur.

4. *kriyā na pratyayavatī nāpratyayavatī kriyā/*
pratyayā nākriyāvantaḥ kriyāvantaś ca santy uta//

Causal efficacy is not to be associated with conditions, causal efficacy is not associated with nonconditions,
conditions are not associated with causal efficacy or noncausal efficacy.

5. *utpadyate pratītyemān itīme pratyayāḥ kila/*
yāvan notpadyata ime tāvan nāpratyayāḥ kathaṃ//

What arises "depends" on these so-called conditions.
So long as there is no arising, how are these not nonconditions?

6. *naivāsato naiva sataḥ pratyayo 'rthasya yujyate/*
asataḥ pratyayaḥ kasya sataś ca pratyayena kiṃ//

Neither being nor nonbeing are associated with conditions of usefulness.
Of what [use] are conditions for nonbeing? And to whom [is there use] in conditions for being?

7. *na san nāsan na sad asan dharmo nirvartate yadā/*
kathaṃ nirvartako hetur evaṃ sati hi yujyate//

Whenever an event that is existent, nonexistent, or both existent and nonexistent does not originate,
how can a cause that thus brings [events] about be reasonable?

8. *anālambana [anārambaṇâ] evāyaṃ san dharma upadiśyate/*
athānālambane dharme kuta ālambanaṃ [anārambaṇâṃ] punaḥ//

This event that exists is described as without a supporting condition.
But where an event is without a supporting condition, again, why [talk of] a supporting condition?

9. *anutpanneṣu dharmeṣu nirodho nopapadyate/*
nānantaram ato yuktaṃ niruddhe pratyayaś ca kaḥ//

When events do not arise, cessation does not happen.
Hence what condition is suitable for a noncontiguous condition in cessation?

10. *bhāvānāṃ niḥsvabhāvānāṃ na sattā vidyate yataḥ/*
satīdam asmin bhavatīty etan naivopapadyate//

Since beings lacking self-nature do not occur as existence per se,
this [statement] "when that is, this comes to be" does not obtain.

11. *na ca vyastasamasteṣu pratyayeṣv asti tat phalaṃ/*
pratyayebhyaḥ kathaṃ tac ca bhaven na pratyayeṣu yat//

The effect is not in the conditions either separately or together.
How could that which is not in the conditions be from the conditions?

12. *athāsad api tat tebhyaḥ pratyayebhyaḥ pravartate/*
apratyayebhyo 'pi kasmān nābhipravartate phalaṃ//

Moreover, if the effect, nonexistent in those [conditions], is set in motion
from those conditions, why is it not set in motion from no conditions?

13. *phalaṃ ca pratyayamayaṃ pratyayāś cāsvayaṃmayāḥ/*
phalam asvamayebhyo yat tat pratyayamayaṃ kathaṃ//

The effect is created by conditions, but the conditions are not created by themselves.

How can an effect created by conditions be from what is not created by itself?

14. *tasmān na pratyayamayaṃ nāpratyayamayaṃ phalaṃ/*
saṃvidyate phalābhāvāt pratyayāpratyayāḥ kutaḥ//

The effect is created neither from conditions nor from no conditions.
How can an effect be obtained from nonexistent conditions and no conditions?

II
gatāgataparīkṣā
Analysis of Coming and Going

1. *gataṃ na gamyate tāvad agataṃ naiva gamyate/*
gatāgatavinirmuktaṃ gamyamānaṃ na gamyate//

What has already gone is not what is going as much as what has not yet gone is not what is going.
Separated from what has already gone and that which has not yet gone, the present process of going does not go.

2. *ceṣṭā yatra gatis tatra gamyamāne ca sā yataḥ/*
na gate nāgate ceṣṭā gamyamāne gatis tataḥ//

Where there is moving there is going and it is in the present process of going.
Moving is not in what has already gone nor in what has not yet gone, but in going.

3. *gamyamānasya gamanaṃ kathaṃ nāmopapatsyate/*
gamyamāno hyagamanaṃ [gamyamānaṃ vigamanaṃ] yadā naivopapadyate//

How would this going of the present process of going take place?
Indeed, whenever there is no going, the present process of going does not take place.

4. *gamyamānasya gamanaṃ yasya tasya prasajyate/*
ṛter [ṛte] gater gamyamānaṃ gamyamānaṃ hi gamyate//

His whose present process of going is a consequence of going, has already gone without the present process of going.
But, indeed, the present process of going is going.

5. *gamyamānasya gamane prasaktaṃ gamanadvayaṃ/*
yena tad gamyamānaṃ ca yac cātra gamanaṃ punaḥ//

Two goings are implied in the going of the process of going;
that by which there is a present process of going and again, the going therein.

6. *dvau gantārau prasajyete prasakte gamanadvaye/*
gantāraṃ hi tiraskṛtya gamanaṃ nopapadyate//

Where there are two goings implied, two goers result.
A goer separated from going does not happen.

7. *gantāraṃ cet tiraskṛtya gamanaṃ nopapadyate/*
gamane 'sati gantātha kuta eva bhaviṣyati//

Going and a goer do not occur as separate thoughts.
Where going does not exist, where then will there be a goer?

8. *gantā na gacchati tāvad agantā naiva gacchati/*
anyo gantur agantuś ca kas tṛtīyo hi ['tha] gacchati//

So long as a nongoer does not go, a goer also does not go.
Other than a goer and a nongoer, who is the third that goes?

9. *gantā tāvad gacchatīti katham evopapatsyate/*
gamanena vinā gantā yadā naivopapadyate//

How does it just happen that the "goer as much as goes"?
When is there a goer where there is no going that takes place?

10. *pakṣo gantā gacchatīti yasya tasya prasajyate/*
    gamanena vinā gantā gantur gamanam icchataḥ//

His whose position implies "the goer goes" seeks
going and a goer where the going is without a goer.

11. *gamane dve prasajyete gantā yady uta gacchati/*
    ganteti cocyate yena gantā san yac ca gacchati//

If a goer goes, that results in two goings, one called
"goer" and the other an existing goer who goes.

12. *gate nārabhyate gantuṃ gantaṃ nārabhyate 'gate/*
    nārabhyate gamyamāne gantum ārabhyate kuha//

To go does not begin in what has already gone, the goer does not begin in what has not yet gone.
To go does not begin in the present process of going. Where does it begin?

13. *na pūrvaṃ gamanārambhād gamyamānaṃ na vā gataṃ/*
    yatrārabhyeta gamanam agate gamanaṃ kutaḥ//

Prior to the beginning of going, there is neither a present process of going nor what has already gone.
Where is there a beginning of going in what has not yet gone? Where is the going?

14. *gataṃ kiṃ gamyamānaṃ kim agataṃ kiṃ vikalpyate/*
    adṛśyamāna ārambhe gamanasyaiva sarvathā//

Who has already gone, the present process of going, who is not yet gone is presumed.
The beginning of going is not in any way seen.

15. *gantā na tiṣṭhati tāvad agantā naiva tiṣṭhati/*
    anyo gantur agantuś ca kas tṛtīyo 'tha tiṣṭhati//

The goer does not stay as much as the nongoer does not stay.
Other than the goer and the nongoer, who is the third that stays?

16. *gantā tāvat tiṣṭhatīti katham evopapatsyate/*
gamanena vinā gantā yadā naivopapadyate//

How can [the statement] "a goer who stays" obtain?
A goer without going just never happens.

17. *na tiṣṭhati gamyamānān na gatān nāgatād api/*
gamanaṃ sampravṛttiś ca nivṛttiś ca gateḥ samā//

He does not stay because [the goer] is either presently going, has already gone, or has not yet gone.
Going is the same as origination, and already having gone is the same as cessation.

18. *yad eva gamanaṃ gantā sa eveti na yujyate/*
anya eva punar gantā gater iti na yujyate//

The statement "the goer is the same as going" is not reasonable.
The statement "the goer is different from going" is not reasonable.

19. *yad eva gamanaṃ gantā sa eva hi bhaved yadi/*
ekībhāvaḥ prasajyeta kartuḥ karmaṇa eva ca//

If the goer would be the same as going, then it would follow that
the doer and the deed become one [are identical].

20. *anya eva punar gantā gater yadi vikalpyate/*
gamanaṃ syād ṛte gantur gantā syād gamanād ṛte//

If it is assumed the goer differs from what has gone, then there
would be going without a goer and there would be a goer without going.

21. *ekībhāvena vā siddhir nānābhāvena vā yayoḥ/*
na vidyate tayoḥ siddhiḥ kathaṃ nu khalu vidyate//

Of what is either identity or difference established?
Now that their establishment is not evident, how then does it occur?

22. *gatyā yayocyate [yayājyate] gantā gatiṃ tām sa na gacchati/*
yasmān na gati pūrvo 'sti kaścit kiṃ cid dhi gacchati//

Whatever goer is said to have gone, he does not go by that going
because he does not exist prior to going. So is there anyone who goes?

23. *gatyā yayocyate [yayājyate] gantā tato 'nyāṃ sa na gacchati/*
gatī dve nopapadyete yasmād eke pragacchati [tu gantari]//

Whatever goer is said to have gone, he does not go by this [being a goer] or that [having gone].
Two goings do not occur because there is only one setting out.

24. *sadbhūto gamanaṃ gantā triprakāraṃ na gacchati/*
nāsadbhūto 'pi gamanaṃ triprakāraṃ sa gacchati//

A true goer going does not go in three ways.
Neither does one who does not exist as going go in three ways.

25. *gamanaṃ sadasadbhūtaḥ triprakāraṃ na gacchati/*
tasmād gatiś ca gantā ca gantavyaṃ ca na vidyate//

An existent or nonexistent going does not go in three ways.
Therefore, the going, the goer, and the gone do not occur.

III
cakṣurādīndriyaparīkṣā
Analysis of the Eye, etc., the Faculties

1. *darśanaṃ śravaṇaṃ ghrāṇaṃ rasanaṃ sparśanaṃ manaḥ/*
indriyāṇi ṣaḍ eteṣāṃ draṣṭavyādīni gocaraḥ//

Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking are
the six faculties and the sphere, their objects of seeing, etc.

2. *svam ātmānaṃ darśanaṃ hi tat tam eva na paśyati/*
na paśyati yad ātmānaṃ kathaṃ drakṣyati tat parān//

Indeed, seeing does not see itself.
How can that which does not see itself see others?

3. *na paryāpto 'gnidṛṣṭānto darśanasya prasiddhaye/*
sadarśanaḥ sa pratyukto gamyamānagatāgataiḥ//

The example of fire [which burns but does not burn itself] is not sufficient for the explanation of seeing.
That, and seeing, is refuted by the already gone, the present process of going and the not yet gone.

4. *nāpaśyamānaṃ bhavati yadā kiṃ cana darśanaṃ/*
darśanaṃ paśyatīty evaṃ katham etat tu yujyate//

If there is seeing which is not presently in the process of seeing,
then how can this statement "seeing sees" obtain?

5. *paśyati darśanaṃ naiva naiva paśyaty adarśanaṃ/*
vyākhyāto darśanenaiva draṣṭā cāpy upagamyatāṃ [avagamyatām]/

Seeing does not see nor does nonseeing see.
And moreover, the seer has been explained above by and as the seeing.

6. *tiraskṛtya drastā nāstyatiraskṛtya ca darśanaṃ/*
[draśṭa nāsty atiraskṛtya tiraskṛtya ca darśanaṃ]
draṣṭavyaṃ darśanaṃ caiva draṣṭāry asati te kutaḥ//

The seer does not exist separated or not separated from seeing.
If the seer does not exist, where is the seeing and the seen?

7. *pratītya mātāpitarau yathoktaḥ putrasaṃbhavaḥ/*
cakṣūrūpe pratītyaivamukto vijñānasaṃbhavaḥ//[1]

As the birth of a son is said to be dependent upon a mother and father,
so the arising of consciousness is dependent upon eye and form [material objects seen].

8. *draṣṭavyadarśanābhāvād vijñānādicatuṣṭayam/*
nāstīti upādānādīni bhaviṣyanti punaḥ katham//

From the non-existence of seeing and the object seen, consciousness and the other four [form, sensation, perception, and disposition] do not exist.
How will there be grasping [sensation, liking, desiring], etc.?

9. *vyākhyātaṃ śravaṇaṃ ghrāṇaṃ rasanaṃ sparśanaṃ manaḥ/*
darśanenaiva jānīyāc chrotṛśrotavyakādi ca//

What has been explained for seeing [applies equally to]
hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking as well as the origin of the hearer and the sound, etc.

IV
skandhaparīkṣā
Analysis of the Personality Skeins

1. *rūpakāraṇanirmuktaṃ na rūpam upalabhyate/*
rūpeṇāpi na nirmuktaṃ dṛśyate rūpakāraṇammṃ//

Material form separated from the cause of material form is not obtained.
And the cause of material form separated from material form is not seen.

2. *rūpakāraṇanirmukte rūpe rūpaṃ prasajyate/*
ahetukaṃ na cāsty arthaḥ kaścid ahetukaḥ kva cit//

If material form separated from the cause of material form occurs, then there is material form without a cause.
But there is not any effect without a cause anywhere.

3. *rūpena tu vinirmuktaṃ yadi syād rūpakāraṇam/*
akāryakaṃ kāraṇaṃ syāt nāstyakāryaṃ ca kāraṇam//

But if, in material form, there would be material form and the cause of material form separated in two parts,

then there would be a cause without an effect. There is no cause without an effect.

4. *rūpe saty eva rūpasya kāraṇaṃ nopapadyate/*
rūpe 'saty eva rūpasya kāraṇaṃ nopapadyate//

Where material form is, the cause of material form does not occur.
Where material from is not, the cause of material form does not occur.

5. *niskāraṇaṃ punā rūpaṃ naiva naivopapadyate/*
tasmāt rūpagatān kāmścin na vikalpān vikalpayet//

Again, material form without a cause does not occur.
Therefore, one should not conjecture about any false discriminations about material forms.

6. *na kāraṇasyā sadṛśaṃ kāryam ity upapadyate//*
na kāraṇasyāsadṛśaṃ kāryam ity upapadyate//

The statement "the effect is similar to the cause" does not obtain.
The statement "the effect is not similar to the cause" does not obtain.

7. *vedanā cittasaṃjñānāṃ saṃskārānāṃ ca sarvaśaḥ/*
sarveṣām eva bhāvānāṃ rūpenaiva samaḥ kramaḥ//

Feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and dispositions in general,
as well as the totality of beings follow the same rule as material form.

8. *vigrahe yaḥ parīhāraṃ kṛte śūnyatayā vadet/*
sarvaṃ tasyāparihṛtaṃ samaṃ sādhyena jāyate//

Whoever argues against openness for the sake of refuting an argument,
all his refutations do not refute for he is conquered by the same proof.

9. *vyākhyāne ya upālambhaṃ kṛte śūnyatayā vadet/*
sarvaṃ tasyānupālabdhaṃ samaṃ sādhyena jāyate//

Whoever explains by means of openness for the sake of ascertaining,

all his ascertainments do not ascertain for he is conquered by the same demonstration.

V

dhātuparīkṣā

Analysis of the Elements

1. *nākāśaṃ vidyate kiṃcit pūrvam ākāśalakṣanāt/*
alakṣaṇaṃ prasajyeta syāt pūrvaṃ yadi lakṣaṇāt//

Space does not occur prior to some characteristic of space.
If it would exist prior to having a characteristic, it follows that there would be space without a characteristic.

2. *alakṣaṇo na kaścic ca bhāvaḥ saṃvidyate kva cit/*
asaty alakṣaṇe bhāve kramatāṃ kuha lakṣaṇaṃ//

Not any existent without a characteristic is found anywhere.
Where a being without a characteristic does not exist, where does that characteristic appear?

3. *nālakṣaṇe lakṣaṇasya pravṛttir na salakṣaṇe/*
salakṣaṇālakṣaṇābhyāṃ nāpy anyatra pravartate//

A characteristic appears not in what has a characteristic nor in what does not have a characteristic.
Nor is it set in motion from any (existent) other than what neither has nor does not have a characteristic.

4. *lakṣaṇāsampravṛttau ca na lakṣyam upapadyate/*
lakṣyasyānupapatau ca lakṣaṇasyāpy asambhavaḥ//

If neither characteristic is present, the characterized does not occur.
If there is no occurrence of the characterized, there is no occurrence of the characteristic.

5. *tasmān na vidyate lakṣyaṃ lakṣaṇaṃ naiva vidyate/*
lakṣyalakṣaṇanirmukto naiva bhāvo 'pi vidyate//

Therefore the characterized does not occur nor does the characteristic occur.
Separate from the characteristic and the characterized, no existent occurs.

6. *avidyamāne bhāve ca kasyābhāvo bhaviṣyati/*
bhāvābhāvavidharmā ca bhāvābhāvam avaiti kaḥ//

How will there be a being where a being is not occuring?
And who favors the statement "existents and nonexistents are beings and nonbeings devoid of attributes"?

7. *tasmān na bhāvo nābhāvo na lakṣyaṃ nāpi lakṣaṇam/*
ākāśaṃ ākāśasamā dhātavaḥ pañca ye pare ['pare]//

Therefore space is neither an existent nor a nonexistent, neither the characterized nor a characteristic.
The other five elements are the same as space.

8. *astitvaṃ ye tu paśyanti nāstitvaṃ cālpabuddhayaḥ/*
bhāvānāṃ te na paśyanti draṣṭavyopaśamaṃ śivaṃ//

But those of inferior insight who see only the existence and nonexistence of beings
do not see the emancipating cessation of appearances.

VI
rāgaraktaparīkṣā
Analysis of Passion and the Impassioned

1. *rāgād yadi bhavet pūrvaṃ rakto rāgatiraskṛtaḥ/*
taṃ pratītya bhaved rāgo rakte rāgo bhavet sati//

If an impassioned one would exist prior to passion and separate from passion,
then passion would depend on him and passion would exist only where there is an impassioned one.

2. *rakte 'sati punā rāgaḥ kuta eva bhaviṣyati/*
   sati vāsati vā rāge rakte 'py eṣa samaḥ kramaḥ//

Again, where an impassioned one does not exist, where will there be passion?
The passion neither exists nor does not exist in the impassioned and vice versa.

3. *sahaiva punar udbhūtir na yuktā rāgaraktayoḥ/*
   bhavetāṃ rāgaraktau hi nirapekṣau parasparaṃ//

Again, the conjunction of the passion along with the impassioned does not exist.
Indeed, that would make passion and the impassioned independent of one another.

4. *naikatve sahabhāvo 'sti na tenaiva hi tat saha/*
   pṛthaktve sahabhāvo 'tha kuta eva bhaviṣyati//

There exists no concomitance in identity because one is not with the other.
Moreover, in difference where will there be comcomitance?

5. *ekatve sahabhāvaś cet syāt sahāyaṃ vināpi saḥ/*
   pṛthaktve sahabhāvaś cet syāt sahāyaṃ vināpi saḥ//

Would identity be with as well as without this concomitance?
Would difference be with as well as without this concomitance?

6. *pṛthaktve sahabhāvaś ca yadi kiṃ rāgaraktayoḥ/*
   siddhaḥ pṛthakprthagbhāvaḥ sahabhāvo yatas tayoḥ//

If there is concomitance of the passion and the impassioned in the difference,
what is distinct and how is their concomitance established in it?

7. *siddhaḥ pṛthak pṛthagbhāvo yadi vā rāgaraktayoḥ/*
   sahabhāvaṃ kimarthaṃ tu parikalpayase tayoḥ//

If the individuality of passion and the impassioned is established,
for what purpose do you determine their concomitance?

8. *pṛthag na sidhyatīty evaṃ sahabhāvaṃ vikāṅkṣasi/*
   sahabhāvaprasiddhyarthaṃ pṛthaktvaṃ bhūya icchasi//

You aim at concomitance and thus difference is not "established."
You look for the existence of difference for the purpose of explaining concomitance.

9. *pṛthagbhāvāprasiddheś ca sahabhāvo na sidhyati/*
   katamasmin pṛthagbhāve sahabhāvaṃ satīcchasi//

Concomitance is not established and individuality is not explained.
You are looking to which, individuality or difference?

10. *evaṃ raktena rāgasya siddhir na saha nāsaha/*
    rāgavat sarvadharmāṇāṃ siddhir na saha nāsaha//

Thus nothing is established about passion with or without the impassioned.
Like passion, nothing is established about events with or without all others.

VII
saṃskṛtaparīkṣa
Analysis of the Conditioned

1. *yadi saṃskṛta utpādas tatra yuktā trilakṣaṇī/*
   athāsaṃskṛta utpādaḥ kathaṃ saṃskṛtalakṣaṇam//

If arising is conditioned, then possessing three marks is entailed [origination, duration, destruction].
But if arising is not conditioned, how is it a mark of the conditioned?

2. *utpādādyās trayo vyastā nālaṃ lakṣaṇakarmaṇi/*
   saṃskṛtasya samastāḥ syur ekatra katham ekadā//

When the three, origination, etc., are separated, they are not sufficient for the functions of the marks of conditioning.
If they were combined, how would they occur at one place at one and the same time?

3. *utpādasthitibhaṅgānām anyat saṃskṛtalakṣaṇaṃ/*
asti ced anavasthaivaṃ nāsti cet te na saṃskṛtāḥ//

If there are other marks of conditioning than those of origination, duration, and destruction, there is an infinite regress.
If there is not, then they are not conditioned.

4. *utpādotpāda utpādo mūlotpādasya kevalaṃ/*
utpādotpādam utpādo maulo janayate punaḥ//

Origination is the arising of arising, the isolated beginning of origination.
Again, origination is caused to arise by the aboriginal arising of arising.

5. *utpādotpāda utpādo mūlotpādasya te yadi/*
maulenājanitas taṃ te sa kathaṃ janayiṣyati//

If origination is the arising of arising, it is the source of arising for you.
How, for you, will it arise out of what has not arisen aboriginally?

6. *sa te maulena janito maulam janayate yadi/*
maulaḥ sa tenājanitastam utpādayate kathaṃ//

If what has arisen out of the aboriginal is, for you, given rise to by the aboriginal,
how does the aboriginal occur out of that which has not arisen.

7. *ayam utpadyamānas te kāmam utpādayed imaṃ/*
yadīmam utpādayitum ajātaḥ śaknuyād ayam//

This present arising, for you, intends that which would arise
unless this was able to not give rise to that which is to arise.

8. *pradīpaḥ svaparātmānau saṃprakāśayitā yathā/*
utpādaḥ svaparātmānāv ubhāv utpādayet tathā//

As light causes illumination of itself as well as others,
so arising would give rise to itself as well as others.

9. *pradīpe nāndhakāro 'sti yatra cāsau pratiṣṭhitaḥ/*
kiṃ prakāśayati dīpaḥ prakāśo hi tamovadhaḥ//

There is no darkness in light or where this [light] is situated.
What does a lamp illumine when light indeed destroys darkness?

10. *katham utpadyamānena pradīpena tamo hataṃ/*
notpadyamāno hi tamaḥ pradīpaḥ prāpnute yadā//

How is darkness destroyed by the shining of light?
Indeed there is no shining when light is reached by darkness.

11. *aprāpyaiva pradīpena yadi vā nihataṃ tamaḥ/*
ihasthaḥ sarvalokasthaṃ sa tamo nihaniṣyati//

But if darkness is overwhelmed by the light without having reached it,
then in that case, it will destroy the darkness abiding in all the world.

12. *pradīpaḥ svaparātmānau saṃprakāśayate yadi/*
tamo 'pi svaparātmānau chādayiṣyaty asaṃśayaṃ//

If light is illuminated by itself or by another [source],
then darkness will undoubtedly conceal itself as well as others.

13. *anutpanno 'yam utpādaḥ svātmānaṃ janayet kathaṃ/*
athotpanno janayate jāte kiṃ janyate punaḥ//

How would this arising, which has not arisen, give rise to itself?
Besides, if it is the arisen that is given rise to, again, the arisen is given rise to by what?

14. *notpadyamānaṃ notpannaṃ nānutpannaṃ kathaṃ ca na/*
utpadyate tathākhyātaṃ [tad ākhyātaṃ] gamyamānagatāgataiḥ//

How do neither the nonarising, the nonarisen, or the arisen [not unarisen] arise?
They are known in the [same] way as going, gone, and not gone.

15. *utpadyamānam utpattāv idaṃ na kramate yadā/*
katham utpadyamānaṃ tu pratītyotpattim ucyate//

If this present arising is not preceeded by arising,
how is present arising called dependent arising?

16. *pratītya yad yad bhavati tat tac chāntaṃ svabhāvataḥ/*
tasmād utpadyamānaṃ ca śāntam utpattir eva ca//

That which comes into being dependently, that is inherently peaceful.
Therefore arising and presently arising are peaceful.

17. *yadi kaścid anutpanno bhāvaḥ samvidyate kva cit/*
utpadyeta sa kiṃ tasmin bhāva utpadyate 'sati//

If there is any nonarisen being, it would be arisen by being found anywhere.
Where the being does not exist, it is arisen by what?

18. *utpadyamānam utpādo yadi cotpādayaty ayaṃ/*
utpādayet tam utpādam utpādaḥ katamaḥ punaḥ//

If the arising of the presently arising is caused by having arisen,
again, which arising would give rise to that arising?

19. *anya utpādayaty enaṃ yady utpādo 'navasthitiḥ/*
athānutpāda utpannaḥ sarvam utpadyate tathā//

If another causes this arising, then arising is an infinite regress.
In that way, then, all nonarising is arisen by the arisen.

20. *sataś ca tāvad utpattir asataś ca na yujyate/*
na sataś cāsataś ceti pūrvam evopapāditaṃ//

Therefore the arising of what exists and the arising of what does not exist do not occur.
"Existence and nonexistence" have been discussed previously [I, 6-7].

21. *nirudhyamānasyotpattir na bhāvasyopapadyate/*
yaś cānirudhyamānas tu sa bhāvo nopapadyate//

The arising of a presently ceasing being does not occur.
That being which is not now presently ceasing does not occur.

22. *na sthitabhāvas tiṣṭhaty asthitabhāvo na tiṣṭhati/*
[nāsthitas tiṣthate bhāvaḥ sthito bhāvo na tiṣṭhati]
na tiṣṭhati [tiṣṭhate] tiṣṭhamānaḥ ko 'nutpannaś ca tiṣṭhati//

No being that has endured stays, and a being that has not endured does not stay.
The presently enduring does not stay and so which nonarisen stays?

23. *sthitir nirudhyamānasya na bhāvasyopapadyate/*
yaś cānirudhyamānas tu sa bhāvo nopapadyate//

The endurance of a presently ceasing being does not occur.
That being which is not now presently ceasing does not occur.

24. *jarāmaraṇadharmeṣu sarvabhāveṣu sarvadā/*
tiṣṭhanti katame bhāvā ye jarāmaraṇaṃ vinā//

All of the beings always [experience] the events of old age and death.
Where do which beings endure without old age and death?

25. *sthityānyayā sthiteḥ sthānaṃ tayaiva ca na yujyate/*
utpādasya yathotpādo nātmanā na parātmanā//

Enduring should endure with the having endured but neither of them is reasonable.
just as the arising of arising is not from itself or another.

26. *nirudhyate nāniruddhaṃ na niruddhaṃ nirudhyate/*
tathāpi [tathā] nirudhyamānaṃ [ca] kim ajātaṃ nirudhyate//

Neither that which has ceased ceases nor that which has not ceased ceases,
so also the presently ceasing. What ceases that has not arisen?

27. *sthitasya tāvad bhāvasya nirodho nopapadyate/*
nāsthitasyāpi bhāvasya nirodha upapadyate//

Therefore the cessation of the enduring being does not occur.
Moreover, the cessation of a nonenduring being does not occur.

28. *tayaivāvasthayāvasthā na hi saiva nirudhyate/*
anyayāvasthayāvasthā na cānyaiva nirudhyate//

Indeed, a state does not cease on account of itself, and
a state does not cease on account of another state.

29. *yadaiva sarvadharmānām utpādo nopapadyate/*
tadaivaṃ sarvadharmānāṃ nirodho nopapadyate//

When the arising of all events does not take place,
then the cessation of all events does not happen.

30. *sataś ca tāvad bhāvasya nirodho nopapadyate/*
ekatve na hi bhāvaś ca nābhāvaś copapadyate//

Therefore, the cessation of a being that exists does not take place.
In identity, indeed, neither a being or a nonbeing happen.

31. *asato 'pi na bhāvasya nirodha upapadyate/*
na dvitīyasya śirasaḥ chedanaṃ vidyate yathā//

And the cessation of a being that does not exist does not take place,
just as a second beheading does not occur.

32. *na svātmanā nirodho 'sti nirodho na parātmanā/*
utpādasya yathopādo nātmanā na parātmanā//

There is no cessation on account of itself or on account of another,
just as the arising of arising is not out of itself or out of another.

33. *utpādasthitibhaṅgānām asiddher nāsti saṃskṛtam/*
saṃskṛtasyāprasiddhau ca katham setsyaty asaṃskṛtam//

With the nonestablishment of arising, duration, and cessation, conditioning does not exist.
Where there is no establishment of conditioning, how will the unconditioned be proved?

34. *yathā māyā yathā svapno gandharvanagaram yathā/*
tathotpādas tathā sthānaṃ tathā bhaṅga udāhṛtam//

As illusion, as dream, as an imaginary city in the sky,
so have arising, endurance, and destruction been illustrated.

VIII
karmakārakaparīkṣā
Analysis of Action and Agent

1. *sadbhūtaḥ kārakaḥ karma sadbhūtaṃ na karoty ayam/*
kārako nāpy asadbhūtaḥ karmāsadbhūtam īhate//

A true agent does not do this true act.
Nor does a true agent attempt a true act.

2. *sadbhūtasya kriyā nāsti karma ca syād akartṛkam/*
sadbhūtasya kriyā nāsti kartā ca syād akarmakaḥ//

There is no activity of a true action and so it would be without an agent.
There is no activity of a true agent and so it would be without action.

3. *karoti yady asadbhūto 'sadbhūtaṃ karma kārakaḥ/*
ahetukaṃ bhavet karma kartā cāhetuko bhavet//

If an untrue agent does an untrue act, the act would be
without a cause and the agent would be without a cause.

4. *hetāv asati kāryaṃ ca kāraṇaṃ ca na vidyate/*
tadabhāve kriyā kartā kāraṇaṃ ca na vidyate//

Where the cause does not exist, neither the antecedent cause nor the act to be done occur.
Where these do not exist, the activity, the agent, and the act to be done do not occur.

5. *dharmādharmau na vidyete kriyādīnām asaṃbhāve/*
dharme cāsaty adharme ca phalaṃ tajjaṃ na vidyate//

Neither [action] in accord with the teaching nor [action] not in accord with the teaching occurs in the existence of activity, etc.
The effect does not exist in [action] in accord with the teaching nor in [action] not in accord with the teaching, so it does not occur.

6. *phale 'sati na mokṣāya na svargāyopapadyate/*
mārgaḥ sarvakriyāṇāṃ ca nairarthakyaṃ prasajyate//

Where the effect does not exist, the path goes not to heaven and
not to liberation, and the purposelessness of all activities follows.

7. *kārakaḥ sadasadbhūtaḥ sadasat kurute na tat/*
parasparaviruddhaṃ hi saccāsac caikataḥ kutaḥ//

A true or untrue agent does not do what is true or untrue,
because existence and nonexistence are indeed mutually contradictory.

8. *satā ca kriyate nāsan nāsatā kriyate ca sat/*
kartrā sarve prasajyante doṣās tatra ta eva hi//

An existent [act] is not done by a nonexistent agent and a nonexistent [act] is not done by an existent agent.
Indeed, in that case, all these errors follow.

9. *nāsadbhūtaṃ na sadbhūtaḥ sadasadbhūtam eva vā/*
karoti kārakaḥ karma pūrvoktair eva hetubhiḥ//

No true agent does an untrue or both true and untrue act
for the reasons above.

10. *nāsadbhūto 'pi sadbhūtam sadasadbhūtam eva vā/*
    karoti kārakaḥ karma pūrvoktair eva hetubhiḥ//

Also no untrue agent does an act that is real or
both a real and unreal act for the reasons above.

11. *karoti sadasadbhūto na san nāsac ca kārakaḥ/*
    karma tat tu vijānīyāt pūrvoktair eva hetubhiḥ//

A true or untrue agent does not do a real or unreal act.
This too is understood from the reasons above.

12. *pratītya kārakaḥ karma taṃ pratītya ca kārakaṃ/*
    karma pravartate nānyat paśyāmaḥ siddhikāraṇaṃ//

The agent depends on action and that depends on an agent.
We see no other established reason action sets in motion.

13. *evaṃ vidyād upādānaṃ vyutsargād iti karmaṇaḥ/*
    kartuś ca karmakartṛbhyāṃ śeṣān bhāvān vibhāvayet//

Thus from the "rejection" of the agent and of actions and agents, the method for knowledge of clinging and all the rest about beings should come to light.

IX
pūrvaparīkṣā
Analysis of Prior Existence

1. *darśanaśravaṇādīni vedanādīni cāpyatha/*
   bhavanti yasya prāgebhyaḥ so 'stīty eke vadanty uta//

Some say: "He, whose seeing, hearing, etc., and also feeling, etc., exist, exists prior to these."

2. *kathaṃ hy avidyamānasya darśanādi bhaviṣyati/*
   bhāvasya tasmāt prāgebhyaḥ so 'sti bhāvo vyavasthitaḥ//

Indeed, how will there be seeing, etc., belonging to one not present?
Therefore, prior to these, he exists as a being that is present.

3. *darśanaśravaṇādibhyo vedanādibhya eva ca/*
yaḥ prāg vyavasthito bhāvaḥ kena prajñapyate 'tha saḥ//

Whichever being present previous to seeing, hearing, etc.,
and to feeling, etc., by what means is he caused to be discerned?

4. *vināpi darśanādīni yadi cāsau vyavasthitaḥ/*
amūny api bhaviṣyanti vinā tena na saṃśayaḥ//

If this [being] is present without seeing, etc.,
these will doubtless exist without him.

5. *ajyate kenacit [kaścit] kiṃcit kenac id ajyate/*
kutaḥ kiṃcid vinā kaścit kiṃcit kiṃcid vinā kutaḥ//

Someone is driven by something, something is driven by someone.
Where is there someone without something, and where is there something without someone?

6. *sarvebhyo darśanādibhyaḥ kaścit pūrvo na vidyate/*
ajyate darśanādīnām anyena punar anyadā//

Someone does not occur prior to all, to seeing, etc.
Again, by contrast, he is driven by means of seeing, etc.

7. *sarvebhyo darśanādibhyo yadi pūrvo na vidyate/*
ekaikasmāt kathaṃ pūrvo darśanādeḥ sa vidyate//

If someone does not occur prior to all, to seeing, etc.,
how does he occur prior to a single seeing, etc.

8. *draṣṭā sa eva sa śrotā sa eva yadi vedakaḥ/*
ekaikasmād bhavet pūrvaṃ evaṃ caitan na yujyate//

If he is a seer while he is a hearer and while he is a feeler,
he would be prior to each single one and that is not reasonable.

9. *draṣṭānya eva śrotānyo vedako 'nyaḥ punar yadi/*
sati syād draṣṭari śrotā bahutvaṃ cātmanāṃ bhavet//

Again, if a different seer, a different hearer, a different feeler exists, a hearer would be where there is a seer and there would be a plurality of selves.

10. *darśanaśravaṇādīni vedanādīni cāpy atha/*
bhavanti yebhyas teṣv eṣa bhūteṣv api na vidyate//

Seeing, hearing, etc., and feeling, etc., also exist,
but [the self] does not occur from them or in these existents.

11. *darśanaśravaṇādīni vedanādīni cāpy atha/*
na vidyate ced yasya sa na vidyanta imāny api//

If he whose seeing, hearing, etc., and feeling, etc., does not occur,
then these are also not observed.

12. *prāk ca yo darśanādibhyaḥ sāmprataṃ cordhvam eva ca/*
na vidyate 'sti nāstīti nivṛttās tatra kalpanāḥ//

He who is prior to, simultaneous with, or posterior to seeing, etc., does not occur and thereby,
fictions concerning existence and nonexistence are renounced.

X
agnīndhanaparīkṣā
Analysis of Fire and Fuel

1. *yad indhanaṃ sa ced agnir ekatvaṃ kartṛkarmaṇoḥ/*
anyaś ced indhanād agnir indhanād apy ṛte bhavet//

If fuel is fire, there is identity of agent and action.
If fire is different from fuel, then it would surely exist without fuel.

2. *nityapradīpta eva syād apradīpan ahetukaḥ/*
punarārambhavaiyarthyam evaṃ cākarmakaḥ sati//

A permanent burning would be without a cause for igniting.
But thus the beginning is without purpose and no action exists.

3. *paratra nirapekṣatvād apradīpan ahetukaḥ/*
punar ārambhavaiyarthyaṃ nityadīptaḥ prasajyate//

Igniting without a cause is independent from the sequel.
But thus the beginning is without purpose and a permanent burning follows.

4. *tatraitasmād [tatraitat syād] idhyamānam indhanaṃ bhavatīti cet/*
kenedhyatām indhanaṃ tat tāvan mātram idaṃ yadā//

In that case, therefore, if "the fuel is presently being ignited,"
by what means other than the fuel is that by which this is here so much as [ignited]?

5. *anyo na prāpsyate 'prāpto na dhakṣyaty adahan punaḥ/*
na nirvāsyaty anirvāṇaḥ sthāsyate vā svalingavān//

If it is not fuel that is not reached by what is other than fuel, the unburnable will not burn.
Preserving the likeness of its own nature [permanent burning] will not be maintained by the nonextinction of the extinguished.

6. *anya evendhanād agnir indhanaṃ prāpnuyād yadi/*
strī saṃprāpnoti puruṣaṃ puruṣaś ca striyaṃ yathā//

If fire is different from fuel, it would reach for fuel,
just as a woman reaches for a man and a man for a woman.

7. *anya evendhanād agnir indhanaṃ kāmam āpnuyāt/*
āgnīndhane yadi syātām anyonyena tiraskṛte//

Fire is different from fuel for fuel would be reached only
if a separation of one from the other would exist in fire and fuel.

8. *yadīndhanam apekṣyāgnir apekṣyāgniṃ yadīndhanam/*
katarat pūrvaniṣpannaṃ yad apekṣyāgnir indhanam//

If fire is dependent on fuel and fuel is dependent on fire,
which is descended from which so that fire and fuel are dependent?

9. *yadīndhanam apekṣyāgnir agneḥ siddhasya sādhanaṃ/*
   evaṃ satīndhanaṃ cāpi bhaviṣyati niragnikaṃ//

If fire is dependent on fire's fuel, the establishement of proof
will thus be the existence of fuel where there is no fire.

10. *yo 'pekṣya sidhyate bhāvas tam evāpekṣya sidhyati/*
    yadi yo 'pekṣitavyaḥ sa sidhyatāṃ kam apekṣya kaḥ//

What demonstrates the dependence demonstrated by the dependence of which being?
If what is to be depended upon is what has demonstrated that, which is dependent on which?

11. *yo 'pekṣya sidhyate bhāvaḥ so 'siddho 'pekṣate kathaṃ/*
    athāpy apekṣate siddhas tv apekṣāsya na yujyate//

How is that dependence demonstrated by the being who is not established in dependence?
But the demonstration of dependence does not occur in dependence.

12. *apekṣyendhanam agnir na nānapekṣyāgnir indhanaṃ/*
    apekṣyendhanam agniṃ na nānapekṣyāgnim indhanaṃ//

Fire is not dependent on fuel and fire is not independent of fuel.
Fuel is not dependent on fire and fuel is not independent of fire.

13. *āgacchaty anyato nāgnir indhane 'gnir na vidyate/*
    atrendhane śeṣam uktaṃ gamyamānagatāgataiḥ//

Where fire does not come from something other than fuel, fire does not occur.
Certainly what has been said about gone, going, and not gone, and the rest applies in the case of fuel.

14. *indhanaṃ punar agnir na nāgnir anyatra cendhanāt/*
nāgnir indhanavān nāgnāv indhanāni na teṣu saḥ//

Again, fire is not fuel and there is no fire other than from fuel.
Fire is not possessed by fuel and the fuels are not in the fire, nor is it in them.

15. *agnīndhanābhyāṃ vyākhyāta ātmopādānayoḥ kramaḥ/*
sarvo niravaśeṣeṇa sārdhaṃ ghaṭapaṭādibhiḥ//

The process of self and grasping is explained from fire, and fuel,
along with the jar and cloth, etc., and all the rest without exception.

16. *ātmanaś ca satattvaṃ ye bhāvānāṃ ca pṛthak pṛthak/*
nirdiśanti na tān manye śāsanasyārthakovidān//

Those who speak about the self and existence as different from beings
do not have, I think, knowledge about the meaning of the teaching [of the Buddha].

XI
pūrvāparakoṭiparīkṣā
Analysis of Past and Future Limits

1. *pūrvā prajñāyate koṭir nety uvāca mahāmuniḥ/*
saṃsāro 'navarāgro hi nāsyādir nāpti paścimaṃ//[2]

The great sage said, "The prior limit is unknown.
Saṃsāra is without beginning or end. Indeed, there is no beginning or end."

2. *naivāgraṃ nāvaraṃ yasya tasya madhyaṃ kuto bhavet/*
tasmān nātropapadyante pūrvāparasahakramāḥ//

Where would the middle of what has no beginning or of what has no end be?
Therefore, the processes of the past, the present, and the future do not take place here.

3. *pūrvaṃ jātiryadi bhavej jarāmaraṇam uttaraṃ/*
nirjarāmaraṇā jātir bhavej jāyeta cāmṛtaḥ//

If birth is first, old age and death would be later,
then birth would be without old age and death and an immortal would have been born.

4. *paścāj jātir yadi bhavej jarāmaraṇam āditaḥ/*
ahetukam ajātasya syāj jarāmaraṇaṃ kathaṃ//

If birth is later, there would be old age and death from the beginning.
How could the old age and death of the unborn be without a cause?

5. *na jarāmaraṇenaiva [jarāmaraṇaṃ caiva] jātiś ca saha yujyate/*
mriyeta jāyamānaś ca syāc cāhetukatobhayoḥ//

Birth does not occur simultaneously with old age and death.
He would die by being born and both would be without a cause.

6. *yatra na prabhavanty ete pūrvāparasahakramāḥ/*
prapañcayanti tāṃ jātiṃ taj jarāmaraṇaṃ ca kiṃ//

Where the processes of the past, the future, and the present do not come forth,
what do they explain in detail about birth, old age, and death?

7. *kāryaṃ ca kāraṇaṃ caiva lakṣyaṃ lakṣaṇam eva ca/*
vedanā vedakaś caiva santy arthā ye ca ke cana//

Cause and effect, characteristic and characterized,
feeler and feeling, and whatever else, do not meaningfully exist.

8. *pūrvā na vidyate kotiḥ sasaṃsārasya na kevalaṃ/*
sarveṣām api bhāvānāṃ pūrvā koṭī na vidyate//

The prior limit of *saṃsāra* does not only not occur,
but also every place prior to the limits of beings does not occur.

XII
duḥkhaparīkṣā
Analysis of Suffering

1. *svayaṃ kṛtaṃ parakṛtaṃ dvābhyāṃ kṛtaṃ ahetukaṃ/*
   duḥkham ity eka icchanti tac ca kāryaṃ na yujyate//

Some say, "Suffering is self-caused, caused by another, caused by both or uncaused."
But it [suffering] does not occur as an effect.

2. *svayaṃ kṛtaṃ yadi bhavet pratītya na tato bhavet/*
   skandhān imān amī skandhāḥ sambhavanti pratītya hi//

If it would be self-caused, it would not be dependent.
Skandhas [separate heaps of conditionings that make up a sense of personality] arise dependent on these boundless *skandhas*.

3. *yady amībhya ime 'nye syurebhyo vāmī pare yadi/*
   bhavet parakṛtaṃ duḥkhaṃ parair ebhir amī kṛtāḥ//

If these are different from those or those would be some place other than these,
suffering would be caused by others and those caused by means of these others.

4. *svapudgalakṛtaṃ duḥkhaṃ yadi duḥkhaṃ punar vinā/*
   svapudgalaḥ sa katamo yena duḥkhaṃ svayaṃ kṛtaṃ//

If suffering is caused by the person himself, then [he would exist] without suffering.
Who is this person himself by means of whom suffering is self-caused?

5. *parapudgalajaṃ duḥkhaṃ yadi yasmai pradīyate/*
   pareṇa kṛtvā tad duḥkhaṃ sa duḥkhena vinā kutaḥ//

If suffering is produced by another person,
to whom does this suffering caused by another apply since he is without suffering?

6. *parapudgalajaṃ duḥkhaṃ yadi kaḥ parapudgalaḥ/*
vinā duḥkhena yaḥ kṛtvā parasmai prahiṇoti tat//

If suffering is produced by another person, who is the other person without suffering who caused and bestows it on another?

7. *svayaṃ kṛtasyāprasiddher duḥkhaṃ parakṛtaṃ kutaḥ/*
paro hi duḥkhaṃ yat kuryāt tat tasya syāt svayaṃ kṛtaṃ//

Since the self-nature of cause is unexplained for suffering, where is there cause by another?
Indeed the other, from whose cause there is suffering, his suffering would be self-caused.

8. *na tāvat svakṛtaṃ duḥkhaṃ na hi tenaiva tat kṛtaṃ/*
paro nātmakṛtaś cet syād duḥkhaṃ parakṛtaṃ kathaṃ//

Therefore, suffering is not self-caused, indeed it is not caused by means of itself.
How can [suffering] be caused by another if [his] suffering would not be caused by an other not the self?

9. *syād ubhābhyāṃ kṛtaṃ duḥkhaṃ syād ekaikakṛtaṃ yadi/*
parākārāsvayaṃkāraṃ duḥkhaṃ ahetukaṃ kutaḥ//

If suffering would be caused by both, it would be caused one by one.
Where is the uncaused suffering that is not self-caused or caused by another?

10. *na kevalaṃ hi duḥkhasya cāturvidyaṃ na vidyate/*
bāhyānām api bhāvānāṃ cāturvidyaṃ na vidyate//

Indeed, not only does the fourfold account of suffering not occur,
but the fourfold account of the downfall of beings also does not occur.

XIII
saṃskāraparīkṣā
Analysis of Disposition

1. *tan mṛṣā moṣadharma yad bhagavān ity abhāṣata/*
   sarve ca moṣadharmāṇaḥ saṃskārās tena te mṛṣā//

The Venerable One said, "whatever event is deceptive, that is false."
Deceptive events are in all dispositions, so they are false.

2. *tan mṛṣā moṣadharma yad yadi kiṃ tatra muṣyate/*
   etat tūktaṃ bhagavatā śūnyatāparidīpakam//

If whatever deceptive event is false, then it is deceived by what?
This was said by the Venerable One to illuminate openness.

3. *bhāvānāṃ niḥsvabhāvatvam anyathābhāvadarśanāt/*
   asvabhāvo bhāvo nāsti [nasvabhāvas ca bhāvo 'sti] bhāvānāṃ śūnyatā yataḥ//

Since beings are viewed as having no self-nature in a changing nature and a being lacking self-nature does not exist,
then openness [is the self-nature] of beings.

4. *kasya syād anyathābhāvaḥ svabhāvaś cen na vidyate/*
   kasya syād anyathābhāvaḥ svabhāvo yadi vidyate//

Whose would be the changing nature if self-nature does not occur?
Whose would be the changing nature if self-nature does occur?

5. *tasyaiva nānyathābhāvo nāpy anyasyaiva yujyate/*
   yuvā na jīryate yasmād yasmāj jīrṇo na jīryate//

No changing nature, either of itself or of another, occurs.
This is because a youth does not age and an aged one does not age.

6. *tasya ced anyathābhāvaḥ kṣīram eva bhaved dadhi/*
   kṣīrād anyasya kasya cid dadhibhāvo bhaviṣyati//

If a changing nature [were] of itself, then milk would be butter.
Since milk differs, the nature of butter will be of what?

7. *yady aśūnyaṃ bhavet kiṃcit syāc chūnyam iti [api] kiṃcana/*
na kiṃcid astyaśūnyaṃ ca kutaḥ śūnyaṃ bhaviṣyati//

If something would be nonopen, then nothing would be "open."
If nothing is nonopen, why will there be open?

8. *śūnyatā sarvadṛṣṭīnāṃ proktā niḥsaraṇaṃ jinaiḥ/*
yeṣāṃ tu śūnyatādṛṣṭis tān asādhyān babhāṣire//

The conquerer taught openness as the refutation of all views.
But those who hold openness as a view are called irremediable.

XIV
saṃsargaparīkṣā
Analysis of Combination

1. *draṣṭavyaṃ darśanaṃ draṣṭā trīṇy etāni dviśo dviśaḥ/*
sarvaśaś ca na saṃsargam anyonyena vrajanty uta//

These three, seeing, the seen, and the seer, in pairs or collectively,
also do not become mutually combined.

2. *evaṃ rāgaś ca raktaś ca rañjanīyaṃ ca dṛśyatām/*
traidhena śeṣāḥ kleśāś ca śeṣāṇy āyatanāni ca//

Thus passion, the impassioned, and object of passion would be seen by means of these three,
as well as the remaining defilements and the remaining spheres of sensation.

3. *anyenānyasya saṃsargas tac cānyatvaṃ na vidyate/*
draṣṭavyaprabhṛtīnāṃ yan na saṃsargaṃ vrajanty ataḥ//

That combined difference of some event with some other does not occur.

Hence, beginning with seeing, which of these do not become combined?

4. *na ca kevalam anyatvaṃ draṣṭavyāder na vidyate/*
kasya cit kena cit sārdhaṃ nānyatvam upapadyate//

Not only does difference [in reference to] seeing, etc., not occur,
even the difference of one event joined in another does not take place.

5. *anyad anyat pratītyānyan nānyad anyad ṛte 'nyataḥ/*
yat pratītya ca yat tasmāt tad anyan nopapadyate//

Differences of one event from another depend on [the fact that] one event is not different from another without that other.
Which which depends on which so that from which it differs does not take place?

6. *yady anyad anyad anyasmād anyasmād apy ṛte bhavet/*
tad anyad anyad anyasmād ṛte nāsti ca nāsty ataḥ//

If one event is different than another from which it differs, it would be without that from which it differs.
But that difference does not exist without the one from which it differs and so it does not exist.

7. *nānyasmin vidyate 'nyatvam ananyasmin na vidyate/*
avidyamāne cānyatve nāsty anyadvā tad eva vā//

Where no difference occurs, the difference in the different does not occur.
And where difference is not present, neither identity nor difference exist.

8. *na tena tasya saṃsargo nānyenānyasya yujyate/*
saṃsṛjyamānaṃ saṃsṛṣṭaṃ samsraṣṭā ca na vidyate//

The combination of identical events [of one to another] or different events [of one differing from another] is not found.
The connecting, the connector, and the connected is not reasonable.

XV
svabhāvaparīkṣā
Analysis of Self-Nature

1. *na saṃbhavaḥ svabhāvasya yuktaḥ pratyayahetubhiḥ/*
   hetupratyayasaṃbhūtaḥ svabhāvaḥ kṛtako bhavet//

There is no arising of self-nature connected with causes and conditions.
Self-nature from causes and conditions would be artificial.

2. *svabhāvaḥ kṛtako nāma bhaviṣyati punaḥ katham/*
   akṛtrimaḥ svabhāvo hi nirapeksaḥ paratra ca//

Again, how will what is called self-nature be artificial?
Self-nature is not made artificially and, indeed, it is independent of others.

3. *kutaḥ svabhāvasyābhāve parābhāvo bhaviṣyati/*
   svabhāvaḥ parabhāvasya parabhāvo hi kathyate//

In a being having self-nature, where will other-nature be?
The self-nature of other-nature is called other-nature.

4. *svabhāvaparabhāvābhyām ṛte bhāvaḥ kutaḥ punaḥ/*
   svabhāve parabhāve vā sati bhāvo hi sidhyati//

Again, where is the being without self-nature or other-natures?
Indeed, it demonstrates that a being exists in self-nature or in other-nature.

5. *bhāvasya ce daprasiddhir abhāvo naiva sidhyati/*
   bhāvasya hy anyathābhāvam abhāvam bruvate janāḥ//

The lack of explanation of being does not establish nonbeing.
The changing nature of being is indeed called nonbeing by people.

6. *svabhāvaṃ parabhāvaṃ ca bhāvaṃ cābhāvam eva ca/*
   ye paśyanti na paśyanti te tattvaṃ buddhaśāne//

Those who see self-nature and other-nature, being and nonbeing,
do not see the truth in the Buddha's teaching.

7. *kātyāyanāvavāde cāstīti nāstīti cobhyaṃ/*
   pratiṣiddhaṃ bhagavatā bhāvābhāvavibhāvinā//

In the instructions to Kātyāyana, both "it is" and "it is not"
were demonstrated by the Buddha as causing the appearance of being and nonbeing.

8. *yady astitvaṃ prakṛtyā syān na bhaved asya nāstitā/*
   prakṛter anyathābhāvo na hi jātūpapadyate//

If existence would be unalterable, there would not be its nonexistence.
Indeed a changing nature of primordial substance never happens.

9. *prakṛtau kasya cāsatyām [vāsatyam] anyathātvaṃ bhaviṣyati/*
   prakṛtau kasya ca satyām anyathātvaṃ bhaviṣyati//

Where primordial substance does not exist, what will have changing nature?
Where primordial substance exists, what will have changing nature?

10. *astīti śāśvatagrāho nāstīty ucchedadarśanaṃ/*
    tasmād astitvanāstitve nāśrīyeta vicakṣaṇaḥ//

"It is" is grasping for eternity. "It is not" is the view of nihilism.
Therefore, existence and nonexistence would not be resorted to by the wise.

11. *asti yad dhi svabhāvena na tan nāstīti śāśvataṃ/*
    nāstīdānīm abhūt pūrvam ity ucchedaḥ prasajyate//

"Whatever exists by self-nature, that does not not exist" and so is permanent.
Annihilation follows from "it does not exist now but existed before."

XVI
bandhanamokṣaparīkṣā
Analysis of Bondage and Freedom

1. *saṃskārāḥ saṃsāranti cen na nityāḥ saṃsāranti te/*
   saṃsāranti ca nānityāḥ sattve 'py eṣa samaḥ kramaḥ//

If dispositions transmigrate, they transmigrate as not permanent and they transmigrate as not impermanent.
It is the same process in a sentient being.

2. *pudgalaḥ saṃsārati cet skandhāyatanadhātuṣu/*
   pañcadhā mṛgyamāṇo 'sau nāsti kaḥ samsariṣyati//

If a person transmigrates fivefold in the elements, sense spheres, and personality skeins
pursuing what does not exist, who will transmigrate?

3. *upādānād upādānaṃ saṃsāran vibhavo bhavet/*
   vibhavaścānupādānaḥ kaḥ sa kiṃ saṃsāriṣyati//

Migrating from grasping to grasping would be annihilation.
Who is destroyed and [thus] not grasping? Who is he who will transmigrate?

4. *saṃskārāṇāṃ na nirvāṇaṃ kathaṃ cid upapadyate/*
   sattvasyāpi na nirvāṇaṃ kathaṃ cid upapadyate//

How does the liberation from dispositions even happen?
How does the liberation of a sentient being also happen?

5. *na badhyante na mucyanta udayavyayadharmiṇaḥ/*
   saṃskārāḥ pūrvavat sattvo badhyate na na mucyate//

Rising and ceasing events are neither bound nor free.
Dispositions are neither bound by nor released by the previously mentioned sentient being.

6. *bandhanaṃ cedupādānaṃ sopādāno na badhyate/*
   badhyate nānupādānaḥ kim avastho 'tha badhyate//

If grasping is bondage, he [who is grasping] is not bound by grasping nor is he bound by not grasping. But who remains bound by grasping?

7. *badhnīyād bandhanaṃ kāmaṃ bandhyāt pūrvaṃ bhaved yadi/*
   na cāsti tat śeṣam [cheṣam] uktaṃ gamyam ānagatāgataiḥ//

If bondage would be prior to what is bound, freely it would bind what does not exist. The rest is discussed by going, gone, and not gone.

8. *baddho na mucyate tāvad abaddho naiva mucyate/*
   syātāṃ baddha mucyamāne yugapad bandhamokṣaṇe//

Therefore, the bound is not freed by the unbound, nor is the unbound freed by the bound.
In presently freeing the bound, bondage and freedom would be simultaneous.

9. *nirvāṣyāmy anupādāno nirvāṇaṃ me bhaviṣyati/*
   iti yeṣāṃ grahas teṣām upādānamahāgrahaḥ//

[For] those who say, "*Nirvāṇa* will be mine," their grasping of the nongrasping of freedom is a gigantic grasping.

10. *na nirvāṇasamāropo na samsārāpakarṣaṇaṃ/*
    yatra kas tatra saṃsāro nirvāṇaṃ kiṃ vikalpyate//

Neither is *nirvāṇa* only *saṃsāra* nor is *saṃsāra* removed away.
Where there is *nirvāṇa*, there is *saṃsāra*. Which is falsely discriminated from which?

XVII

karmaphalaparīkṣā

Analysis of Action and Effect

1. *ātmasaṃyamakaṃ cetaḥ parānugrāhakaṃ ca yat/*
   maitraṃ sa dharmas tad bījaṃ phalasya pretya ceha ca//

Thinking [i.e., willing] self-restraint, kindness toward others, and friendliness is the teaching.
It is that seed of the fruit now and after death.

2. *cetanā cetayitvā ca karmoktaṃ paramarṣiṇā/*
   tasyānekavidho bhedaḥ karmaṇāḥ parikīrtitaḥ//

The Great Sage said *karman* is volition and will in action.
Actions of many distinct kinds have been expounded.

3. *tatra yac cetanety uktaṃ karma tan mānasaṃ smṛtaṃ/*
   cetayitvā ca yat tūktaṃ tat tu kāyikavācikaṃ//

Karman, which is here called "volition," is mindfulness of what is present in the mind.
Further, that called will in action, that is bodily and verbal.

4. *vāgviṣpando 'viratayo yāścāvijñaptisaṃjñitāḥ/*
   avijñaptaya evānyāḥ smṛtā viratayastathā//

Uninterrupted words and deeds, which are false ideas that do not inform,
are called opposite to cessations by means of mindfulness.

5. *paribhogānvayaṃ punyam apuṇyam ca tathāvidhaṃ/*
   cetanā ceti saptaite dharmāḥ karmāñjanāḥ smṛtāḥ//

Enjoyment and energy, merit and demerit, thought and memories,
and volition, according to the precepts, are the seven events that give rise to *karman*.

6. *tiṣṭhaty āpākakālāc cet karma tan nityatāmiyāt/*
niruddhaṃ cen nirudhaṃ satkiṃ phalaṃ janayiṣyati//

If *karman* endures throughout the time of maturation, it would go on in perpetuity.
If it has ceased, then having ceased, what existing fruit will arise?

7. *yo 'ṅkuraprabhṛtir bījāt saṃtāno 'bhipravartate/*
tataḥ phalam ṛte bījāt sa ca nābhipravartate//

A continuity advances by a sprout which is brought forward from a seed.
And therefore, the fruit does not come forward without a seed.

8. *bījāc ca yasmāt saṃtānaḥ samtānāc ca phalodbhavaḥ/*
bījapūrvaṃ phalaṃ tasmān nocchinnaṃ nāpi śāśvataṃ//

Since from the seed there is continuity and from continuity, the origin of the fruit,
the seed is prior to the fruit. Therefore there is neither disruption nor permanence.

9. *yas tasmāc cittasaṃtānaś cetaso 'bhipravartate/*
tataḥ phalam ṛte cittāt sa ca nābhipravartate//

Therefore, that continuity of thought advances by thinking.
And thus thought [the fruit] does not come forward without thinking.

10. *cittāc ca yasmāt saṃtānaḥ samtānāc ca phalodbhavaḥ/*
karmapūrvaṃ phalaṃ tasmān nocchinnaṃ nāpi śāśvataṃ//

Since from thinking there is continuity and from continuity, the origin of the thought,
thought is prior to thinking. Therefore, there is neither disruption nor permanence.

11. *dharmasya sādhanopāyāḥ śuklāḥ karmapathā daśa/*
phalaṃ kāmaguṇāḥ pañca dharmasya pretya ceha ca//

The ten pure action paths are the means leading straight to the goal of the teaching.
The five objects of the senses [bear] fruit, according to the teaching, both now and after death.

12. *bahavaś ca mahāntaś ca dosāḥ syur api kalpanā/*
yady eṣā tena naivaiṣā kalpanātropapadyate//

Many and great errors would be assumed to be true if, by means of imagining,
these [actions] take place here and not those [results].

13. *imāṃ punaḥ pravakṣyāmi kalpanāṃ yātra yojyate/*
buddhaiḥ pratyekabuddhaiś ca śrāvakaiś cānuvarṇitāṃ//

Again, I will explain where this assumption is employed by
awakened ones, by self-awakened ones, and by disciples who praised it.

14. *pattraṃ yathā 'vipranāśas tathaṛnam iva karma ca/*
caturvidho dhātutaḥ sa prakṛtyā 'vyākṛtaśca saḥ//

What is imperishable is like a promisory note and an action like a debt.
It [what is imperishable] has four kinds of elements and it is indeterminable in primoridal substance.

15. *prahāṇato na praheyo bhāvanāheya eva vā/*
tasmād avipraṇāśena jāyate karmaṇāṃ phalaṃ//

[The imperishable is] not abandoned by the act of abandonment or by unabandoned meditation.
Therefore, by means of the imperishable, the fruit is born out of the action.

16. *prahāṇataḥ praheyaḥ syāt karmaṇaḥ saṃkramena vā/*
yadi doṣāḥ prasajyeraṃs tatra karmavadhādayaḥ//

If abandoned by the act of abandonment or by means of the transformation of what would be *karman*,
then errors follow, such as the denial of *karman*, etc.

17. *sarveṣāṃ viṣabhāgānāṃ sabhāgānāṃ ca karmaṇāṃ/*
pratisaṃdhau sadhātūnām eka utpadyate tu saḥ//

When all similar and dissimilar *karmans*
have been put together again with the elements, only one arises.

18. *karmaṇaḥ karmaṇo dṛṣṭe dharma utpadyate tu saḥ/*
dviprakārasya sarvasya vipakve 'pi ca tiṣṭhati//

The view's teaching is it [the imperishable] arises from the action of the two *karmans* [similar and dissimilar].
And it endures in the maturation of everything from the two scattered heaps.

19. *phalavyatikramād vā sa maraṇad va nirudhyate/*
anāsravaṃ sāsravaṃ ca vibhāgaṃ tatra lakṣayet//

It [the imperishable] ceases either from escaping the effect or from death.
A distinction between passion and purity [outflows and the drying up of outflows] would be drawn.

20. *śūnyatā ca na cocchedaḥ saṃsāraś ca na śāśvataṃ/*
karmaṇo 'vipraṇāśaś ca dharmo buddhena deśitaḥ//

Openness is not disruption, and *saṃsāra* is not permanence.
The imperishability [i.e., continuing through their fruits] of the two actions is the teaching elucidated by the Buddha.

21. *karma notpadyate kasmāt niḥsvabhāvaṃ yatas tataḥ/*
yasmāc ca tad anutpannaṃ na tasmād vipraṇaśyati//

Why does *karman* not arise? Because it is without self-nature.
Since it does not arise, therefore it does not perish.

22. *karma svabhāvataś cet syāc chāśvataṃ syād asaṃśayaṃ/*
akṛtaṃ ca bhavet karma kriyate na hi śāśvataṃ//

If *karman* had self-nature, it would certainly be permanent.
Karman that would be uncaused is indeed not caused by permanence.

23. *akṛtābhyāgamabhayaṃ syāt karmākṛtakaṃ yadi/*
abrahmacaryavāsaś ca doṣas tatra prasajyate//

If *karman* would be uncaused, there is fear of encountering [what one did] not cause.
In that case, an unsaintly life and error would follow.

24. *vyavahārā virudhyante sarva eva na saṃśayaḥ/*
puṇyapāpakṛtor naiva pravibhāgaś ca yujyate//

Undoubtedly all practices would be hindered.
The difference between causing merit or evil does not occur.

25. *tad vipakvavipākaṃ ca punar eva vipakṣyati/*
karma vyavasthitaṃ yasmāt tasmāt svābhāvikaṃ yadi//

If *karman* is unchanging because it arises from its own nature,
then maturity that has matured will therefore mature again.

26. *karma kleśātmakaṃ cedaṃ te ca kleśā na tattvataḥ/*
na cet te tattvataḥ kleśāḥ karma syāt tattvataḥ katham//

If *karman* has defilements as self, the defilements are not real.
If they are not real defilements, how would *karman* be real?

27. *karma kleśāś ca dehānāṃ pratyayāḥ samudāhṛtāḥ/*
karma kleśāś ca te śūnyā yadi deheṣu kā kathā//

Actions and defilements are mentioned as conditioning causes of the body.
How are actions and defilements open if they are that [open] in bodies?

28. *avidyānivṛto jantus tṛṣṇāsaṃyojanaś ca saḥ/*
sa bhoktā sa ca na kartur anyo na ca sa eva saḥ//

A sentient being unturned from ignorance is bound by craving.
He is the experiencer and he is not the same and he is not different from the agent.

29. *na pratyayasamutpannaṃ nāpratyayasamutthitaṃ/*
asti yasmād idam karma tasmāt kartāpi nāsty ataḥ//

Because this action does not exist arisen from conditions or not exist arisen from conditions, therefore the agent does not even exist.

30. *karma cen nāsti kartā ca kutaḥ syāt karmajaṃ phalaṃ/*
asaty atha phale bhoktā kuta eva bhaviṣyati//

If action and agent do not exist, where would there be fruit born of action?
Where there is no fruit, where will the experiencer be?

31. *yathā nirmitakaṃ śāstā nirmimīta ṛddhisaṃpadā/*
nirmito nirmimītānyaṃ sa ca nirmitakaḥ punaḥ//

As a teacher has within him the power to magically create a magical illusion and that magical illusion magically creates another magical illusion,

32. *tathā nirmitakākāraḥ kartā yat karma tat kṛtam/*
tadyathā nirmitenānyo nirmito nirmitas tathā//

in the same way, an agent is a magical creator and his action a magical illusion.
It is as a magical illusion magically created by a magical illusion.

33. *kleśāḥ karmāṇi dehāś ca kartāraś ca phalāni ca/*
gandharvanagarākārā marīcisvapnasaṃnibhāḥ//

Defilements, actions, bodies, doers, and effects are like dreams and mirages, made up imaginary cities in the sky.

XVIII

ātmaparīkṣā

Analysis of the Self

1. *ātmā skandhā yadi bhaved udayavyayabhāg bhavet/*
   skandhebhyo 'nyo yadi bhaved bhaved askandhalakṣaṇaḥ//

If the self would be the *skandhas*, it would rise and pass away.
If it would be differerent from the *skandhas*, it would not have the characteristics of the *skandhas*.

2. *ātmany asati cātmīyam kuta eva bhaviṣyati/*
   nirmamo nirahaṃkāraḥ śamād ātmātmanīnayoḥ//

If the self does not exist, what will be one's own?
There is no "I," no "mine" from the calming of what pertains to both senses of self.

3. *nirmamo nirahaṃkāro yaś ca so 'pi na vidyate/*
   nirmamaṃ nirahaṃkāraṃ yaḥ paśyati na paśyati//

He who has no "I" and no "mine" does not occur.
Who sees no "I" and no "mine" does not see.

4. *mamety aham iti kṣīṇe bahirdhādhyātmam eva ca/*
   nirudhyata upādānaṃ tatkṣayāj janmanaḥ kṣayaḥ//

Where "I" and "mine" are internally and externally destroyed,
grasping has ceased. From that destruction birth is destroyed.

5. *karmakleśakṣayān mokṣaḥ karmakleśā vikalpataḥ/*
   te prapañcāt prapañcas tu śūnyatāyāṃ nirudhyate//

Because of the destruction of action and defilement, there is liberation.
There are actions and defilements for one having false notions.
They must be constructed from false imagining and stopped by openness.

6. *ātmety api prajñapitam anātmety api deśitam/*
   buddhair nātmā na cānātmā kaścid ity api deśitaṃ//

The term "*ātman*" pointed out causes it to be distinct from the term "*anātman.*"
Neither a self nor a nonself are pointed out by the *buddhas.*

7. *nivṛttam abhidhātavyaṃ nivṛtte cittagocare/*
   anutpannāniruddhā hi nirvāṇam iva dharmatā//

Where the range of thought is renounced, that which can be stated has ceased to be valid.
Indeed, the nature of events is like liberation, nonarising and nonceasing.

8. *sarvaṃ tathyaṃ na vā tathyaṃ tathyaṃ cātathyam eva ca/*
   naivātathyaṃ naiva tathyam etad buddhānuśāsanaṃ//

Everything is factual, nonfactual, both factual and nonfactual,
neither factual nor nonfactual. This is the instruction of the Buddha.

9. *aparapratyayaṃ śāntaṃ prapañcair aprapañcitaṃ/*
   nirvikalpam anānārtham etat tattvasya lakṣaṇaṃ//

Unconditioned by another, peaceful, not constructed by means of false imaginings,
free from false discriminations and without purpose, this is the mark of reality.

10. *pratītya yad yad bhavati na hi tāvat tad eva tat/*
    na cānyad api tat tasmān nocchinnaṃ nāpi śāśvataṃ//

First off, what arises depending on that is neither identical to nor different from that.
Therefore that is neither disrupted nor permanent [neither annihilated nor eternal].

11. *anekārtham anānārtham anucchedam aśāśvatam/*
    etat tal lokanāthānāṃ buddhānāṃ śāsanāmṛtaṃ//

Nondifferentiated, nonidentical, nonmomentary, nonpermanent,
this is the immortal teaching of the *buddhas*, lords of all the worlds.

12. *saṃbuddhānām anutpāde śrāvakāṇāṃ punaḥ kṣaye/*
jñānaṃ pratyekabuddhānām asamsargāt pravartate//

When accomplished *buddhas* do not arise and *śravakas* cease to be,
pratyeka buddhas with independent knowledge come forth.

XIX
kālaparīkṣa
Analysis of Time

1. *pratyutpanno 'nāgataś ca yady atītamapekṣya hi/*
pratyutpanno 'nāgataś ca kāle 'tīte bhaviṣyataḥ//

If the present and the future are to be dependent on the past,
the present and future will be in past time.

2. *pratyutpanno 'nāgataś ca na stas tatra punaryadi/*
pratyutpanno 'nāgataś ca syātāṃ katham apekṣya taṃ//

Again, if the present and the future do not exist there,
how would the present and the future depend on it?

3. *anapekṣya punaḥ siddhir nātītaṃ vidyate tayoḥ/*
pratyutpanno 'nāgataś ca tasmāt kālo na vidyate//

Again, no demonstrated past occurs independent of both.
Therefore, present and future time do not occur.

4. *etenaivāvaśiṣtau dvau krameṇa parivartakau/*
uttamādhamamadhyādīn ekatvādomṃś ca lakṣayet//

By this method, neither of the two remainders are concluded [to exist]:
and [the same conclusion concerning] above, below, middle, etc., identity, etc., would be drawn.

5. *nāsthito gṛhyate kālaḥ sthitaḥ kālo na vidyate/*
yo gṛhyetāgṛhītaś ca kālaḥ prajñapyate kathaṃ//

What does not endure is not grasped by time and enduring time does not occur.
And how is time caused to be known by what is not grasped by grasping?

6. *bhāvaṃ pratītya kālaś cet kālo bhāvād ṛte kutaḥ/*
na ca kaś cana bhāvo 'sti kutaḥ kālo bhaviṣyati//

If time depends on a being, where is there time without a being?
Not any being exists, so where will time exist?

XX
sāmagrīparīkṣā
Analysis of the Whole

1. *hetoś ca pratyayānāṃ ca sāmagryā jāyate yadi/*
phalam asti ca sāmagryāṃ sāmagryā jāyate kathaṃ//

If an effect is produced by the whole of cause and conditions and exists in the whole, how is it produced by the whole?

2. *hetoś ca pratyayānām ca sāmagryā jāyate yadi/*
phalaṃ nāsti ca sāmagryāṃ sāmagryā jāyate kathaṃ//

If an effect is produced by the whole of cause and conditions and does not exist in the whole, how is it produced by the whole?

3. *hetoś ca pratyayānāṃ ca sāmagryām asti cet phalaṃ/*
gṛhyeta nanu sāmagryāṃ sāmagryāṃ ca na gṛhyate//

If an effect exists in the whole of cause and conditions, all of the whole would never be included in it and all of the whole is not included by it.

4. *hetoś ca pratyayānāṃ ca sāmagryāṃ nāsti cet phalaṃ/*
hetavaḥ pratyayāś ca syur ahetupratyayaiḥ samāḥ//

If the effect does not exist in the whole of cause and conditions,
causes and conditions would be the same as uncaused by means of conditions.

5. *hetukaṃ [hetum] phalasya dattvā [ca] yadi heturnirudhyate/*
yaddattaṃ yan niruddhaṃ ca hetor ātmadvayaṃ bhavet//

If the cause is stopped by the causality having been given to the effect,
that given and that stopped would be two forms of cause.

6. *hetuṃ phalasyādattvā ca yadi hetur nirudhyate/*
hetau niruddhe jātaṃ tat phalamāhetukaṃ bhavet//

If the cause is stopped by the causality not having been given to the effect,
that effect produced where the cause stopped would be without cause.

7. *phalaṃ sahaiva sāmagryā yadi prādurbhavet punaḥ/*
ekakālau prasajyete janako yaś ca janyate//

Again, if the effect would arise together with the whole,
it follows that the producer and the produced are simultaneous.

8. *pūrvam eva ca sāmagryāḥ phalam prādurbhaved yadi/*
hetupratyayanirmuktaṃ phalam āhetukaṃ bhavet//

If the effect would arise prior to the whole, the effect,
separated from cause and conditions, would be without cause.

9. *niruddhe cet phalaṃ hetau hetoḥ saṃkramaṇaṃ bhavet/*
pūrvajātasya hetoś ca punarjanma prasajyate//

If, where the cause has ceased, the cause would transmigrate to the effect,
a rebirth of an already-born cause follows.

10. *janayet phalam utpannaṃ niruddho 'staṃgataḥ kathaṃ/*
tiṣṭhann api kathaṃ hetuḥ phalena janayed vṛtaḥ//

How would what is stopped and ceased give rise to an arisen effect?
And how would an enduring cause be an occasion that gives rise to an effect?

11. *athāvṛtaḥ phalanāsau katamaj janayet phalaṃ/*
na hyadṛṣṭvā vā dṛṣṭvā vā hetur janayate phalaṃ//

Moreover, the occasion which would give rise to the effect is not that effect.
Indeed, the effect is not produced by either a seen or an unseen cause.

12. *nātītasya hy atītena phalasya saha hetunā/*
nājātena na jātena saṃgatirjātu vidyate//

Indeed, a past cause is not together with a past effect.
What arises does not occur accompanied by what is present nor by what is not present.

13. *na jātasya hy ajātena phalasya saha hetunā/*
nātītena na jātena saṃgatir jātu vidyate//

Indeed, a nonpresent cause is not together with a present effect.
What arises does not occur accompanied by the past nor by the present.

14. *nājātasya hi jātena phalasya saha hetunā/*
nājātena na naṣṭena saṃgatir jātu vidyate//

Indeed, a present cause is not together with a nonpresent effect.
What arises does not occur accompanied by what is not present nor by what has perished.

15. *asatyāṃ saṃgatau hetuḥ kathaṃ janayate phalaṃ/*
satyāṃ vā saṃgatau hetuḥ kathaṃ janayate phalaṃ//

Where there is no real association, how is the effect born by the cause?
Or where there is a real association, how is the effect produced by the cause?

16. *hetuḥ phalena śūnyaś cet kathaṃ janayate phalaṃ/*
hetuḥ phalenāśūnyaś cet kathaṃ janayate phalaṃ//

If the cause is open to an effect, how is an effect produced?
If the cause is not open to an effect, how is an effect produced?

17. *phalaṃ notpatsyate 'śūnyam aśūnyaṃ na nirotsyate/*
aniruddham anutpannam aśūnyam tad bhaviṣyati//

An effect will not arise by being nonopen and will not cease by being nonopen.
What is not open will be nonarising and nonceasing.

18. *katham utpatsyate śūnyaṃ kathaṃ śūnyaṃ nirotsyate/*
śūnyam apy aniruddhaṃ tad anutpannaṃ prasajyate//

How will what is open arise, how will what is open cease?
Surely it follows that what is open is nonceasing and nonarising.

19. *hetoḥ phalasya caikatvaṃ na hi jātūpapadyate/*
hetoḥ phalasya cānyatvaṃ na hi jātūpapadyate//

Indeed, an identity of cause and effect does not take place.
Indeed, a difference between cause and effect does not happen.

20. *ektve phalahetvoḥ syād aikyam janakajanyayoḥ/*
pṛthaktve phalahetvoḥ syāt tulyo hetur ahetunā//

In the identity of cause and effect, the producer would be one with the product.
In the difference of cause and effect, the cause would be equal to no cause.

21. *phalaṃ svabhāvasadbhūtaṃ kiṃ hetur janayiṣyati/*
phalaṃ svabhāvāsadbhūtaṃ kiṃ hetur janayiṣyati//

What cause will give rise to an effect that truly exists as self-nature?
What cause will give rise to an effect that does not truly exist as self-nature?

22. *na cājanayamānasya hetutvam upapadyate/*
hetutvānupapattau ca phalaṃ kasya bhaviṣyati//

Causation of what is not arising does not take place.
And in failing to prove causation, the effect will be of what?

23. *na ca pratyayahetūnām iyam ātmānam ātmanā/*
yā sāmagrī janayate sā kathaṃ janayet phalam//

Since that whole of causes and conditions is not produced by itself
or by means of a nonself, how would it produce an effect?

24. *na sāmagrīkṛtaṃ phalaṃ nāsāmagrīkṛtaṃ phalam/*
asti pratyayasāmagrī kuta eva phalaṃ vinā//

The effect is not made by the whole, and the effect is not made by what is not the whole.
Where does the whole of conditions exist without an effect?

XXI
saṃbhavavibhavaparīkṣā
Analysis of Origination and Dissolution

1. *vinā vā saha vā nāsti vibhavaḥ sambhavena vai/*
vinā vā saha vā nāsti saṃbhavo vibhavena vai//

Dissolution does not exist either with or without origination.
Origination does not exist either with or without dissolution.

2. *bhaviṣyati kathaṃ nāma vibhavaḥ sambhavaṃ vinā/*
vinaiva janma maraṇaṃ vibhavo nodbhavaṃ vinā//

What will dissolution then be without origination,
death without birth, dissolution without generation?

3. *saṃbhavenaiva vibhavaḥ kathaṃ saha bhaviṣyati/*
na janmamaraṇaṃ caivaṃ tulyakālaṃ hi vidyate//

How will there be dissolution together with origination?
Indeed, death contemporary with birth does not occur.

4. *bhaviṣyati kathaṃ nāma saṃbhavo vibhavaṃ vinā/*
anityatā hi bhāveṣu na kadācin na vidyate//

What will origination then be without dissolution?
Indeed, never does the impermanence of beings not occur.

5. *saṃbhavo vibhavenaiva kathaṃ saha bhaviṣyati/*
na janma maraṇaṃ caiva tulyakālaṃ hi vidyate//

How will there be origination without dissolution?
Indeed, death contemporary with birth does not occur.

6. *sahānyonyena vā siddhir vinānyonyena vā yayoḥ/*
na vidyate tayoḥ siddhiḥ kathaṃ nu khalu vidyate//

The establishment of them either conjoined by difference or without difference does not occur. How then does the establishment of both occur?

7. *kṣayasya saṃbhavo nāsti nākṣyasyāsti sambhavaḥ/*
kṣayasya vibhavo nāsti vibhavo nākṣayasya ca//

Origination of decay does not exist, origination of nondecay does not exist.
Dissolution of decay and dissolution of nondecay do not exist.

8. *saṃbhavo vibhavaś caiva vinā bhāvaṃ na vidyate/*
saṃbhavaṃ vibhavaṃ caiva vinā bhāvo na vidyate//

Without a being, origination and dissolution do not occur.
Without origination and dissolution, a being does not occur.

9. *saṃbhavo vibhavaś caiva na śūnyasyopapadyate/*
saṃbhavo vibhavaś caiva nāśūnyasyopapadyate//

Origination and dissolution of what is open does not take place.
Origination and dissolution of what is not open does not happen.

10. *saṃbhavo vibhavaś caiva naika ity upapadyate/*
saṃbhavo vibhavaś caiva na nānety upapadyate//

"Origination and dissolution are identical" is not said.
"Origination and dissolution are different" is not said.

11. *dṛśyate saṃbhavaś caiva vibhavaś caiva te bhavet/*
dṛśyate saṃbhavaś caiva mohād vibhava eva ca//

As origination and disappearance is seen by you, so it could exist.
But origination and disappearance is exactly so seen out of delusion.

12. *na bhāvāj jāyate bhāvo bhāvo 'bhāvān na jāyate/*
nābhāvāj jāyate 'bhāvo 'bhāvo bhāvān na jāyate//

A being could not be born by a being, a being is not born by a nonbeing.
A non-being could not be born by a nonbeing, a nonbeing is not born by a being.

13. *na svato jāyate bhāvaḥ parato naiva jāyate/*
na svataḥ parataś caiva jāyate jāyate kutaḥ//

A being is not born by itself nor born by another,
nor by both itself and another. It is born by what?

14. *bhāvam abhyupapannasya śāśvatocchedadarśanaṃ/*
prasajyate sa bhāvo hi nityo 'nityo ['tha] vā bhavet//

He who has agreed to the continuity of existence, the view of permanence and annihilation follows, for existence would indeed certainly be either permanent or impermanent.

15. *bhāvam abhyupapannasya naivocchedo na śāśvatam/*
udayavyayasaṃtānaḥ phalahetvor bhavaḥ sa hi//

For he who has agreed to the continuity of existence as neither permanent nor annihilated,
the continuity of rising and passing away is indeed the continuity of both cause and effect.

16. *udayavyayasaṃtānaḥ phalahetvor bhavaḥ sa cet/*
vyayasyāpunarutpatter hetūccehedaḥ prasajyate//

If the continuity of rising and passing away is the continuity of cause and effect,
it follows that only one [occurance] of arising and of passing away is the annihilation of causality.

17. *sadbhāvasya svabhāvena nāsadbhāvaś ca yujyate/*
nirvāṇakāle cocchedaḥ praśamād bhavasaṃtateḥ//

By means of the self-nature of a real existent, a nonreal existent does not occur.
At the time of *nirvāṇa* there is annihilation of the uninterrupted series of births and transmigrations on account of calmness.

18. *carame na niruddhe ca prathamo yujyate bhavaḥ/*
carame nāniruddhe ca prathamo yujyate bhavaḥ//

A being first occurs where the last has not ceased [or]
a being first occurs where the last has not not ceased.

19. *nirudhyamāne carame prathamo yadi jāyate/*
nirudhyamāna ekaḥ syāj jāyamāno 'paro bhavet//

If the first is born where the last is presently ceasing,
what is ceasing would be one and what is being born would be another.

20. *na cen nirudhyamānaś ca jāyamānaś ca yujyate/*
sārdhaṃ ca mriyate yeṣu teṣu skandheṣu jāyate//

If not, presently ceasing and presently being born occur
where those *skandhas* being born are the same as these dying.

21. *evaṃ triṣv api kāleṣu na yuktā bhavasaṃtatiḥ/*
triṣu kāleṣu yā nāsti sā kathaṃ bhavasaṃtatiḥ//

Thus the continuing series of births and transmigrations is not reasonable in the three times. How can that which does not exist in the three times be [regarded] as a "series"?

XXII
tathāgataparīkṣā
Analysis of the Thus Come/Thus Gone

1. *skandhā na nānyaḥ skandhebhyo nāsmin skandhā na teṣu saḥ/*
tathāgataḥ skandhavān na katamo 'tra tathāgataḥ//

Not the *skandhas* nor different from the *skandhas*, nor are the *skandhas* in him nor is he in them.
The Tathāgata is not possessed of *skandhas*. Who then is the Tathāgata?

2. *buddhaḥ skandhān upādāya yadi nāsti svabhāvataḥ/*
svabhāvataś ca yo nāsti kutaḥ sa parabhāvataḥ//

If the Buddha is clinging to *skandhas*, he does not exist by self-nature.
He who does not exist by self-nature, how does he exist by other-nature?

3. *pratītya parabhāvaṃ yaḥ so 'nātmety upapadyate/*
yaś cānātmā sa ca kathaṃ bhaviṣyati tathāgataḥ//

He who is dependent upon other-nature occurs as "not self."
And how will he who is not self be the *tathāgata*?

4. *yadi nāsti svabhāvaś ca parabhāvaḥ kathaṃ bhavet/*
svabhāvaparabhāvābhyāṃ ṛte kaḥ sa tathāgataḥ//

If self-nature does not exist, how would other-nature exist?
Without self-nature or other-nature, who is he, the Tathāgata?

5. *skandhān yady anupādāya bhavet kaścit tathāgataḥ/*
sa idānīmupādadyādupādāya tato bhavet//

If any Tathāgata would be not clinging to the *skandhas*,
he would now cling and then would be clinging.

6. *skandhān cāpy anupādāya nāsti kaścit tathāgataḥ/*
yaś ca nāsty anupādāya sa upādāsyate kathaṃ//

Not any Tathāgata exists not clinging to *skandhas*.
How will he who does not exist by not clinging be grasped?

7. *na bhavaty anupādattam upādānaṃ ca kiṃ cana/*
na cāsti nirupādānaḥ kathaṃ cana tathāgataḥ//

Nothing is unseized and no one is clinging.
Does the Tathāgata somehow not exist without clinging?

8. *tattvānyatvena yo nāsti mṛgyamānaś ca pañcadhā/*
upādānena sa kathaṃ prajñapyate tathāgataḥ//

He who does not exist is presently being sought for by means of five real and distinct forms of clinging. By what is the Tathāgata known?

9. *yad apīdam upādānaṃ tatsvabhāvān na vidyate/*
svabhāvataś ca yan nāsti kutas tat parabhāvataḥ//

Because of this clinging, what has self-nature does not occur.
What does not exist by self-nature, how does that exist by other nature?

10. *evaṃ śūnyam upādānam upādātā ca sarvaśaḥ/*
prajñapyate ca śūnyena kathaṃ śūnyas tathāgataḥ//

And thus the one who clings is clinging to what is everywhere open.
How is the open Tathāgata known by means of what is open?

11. *śūnyam iti na vaktavyam aśūnyam iti vā bhavet/*
    ubhayaṃ nobhayaṃ ceti prajñaptyarthaṃ tu kathyate//

I am not saying that "what is open" or "what is not open" could exist or "both" or "neither." They are said only for the purpose of teaching.

12. *śāśvatāśāśvatādy atra kutaḥ śānte catuṣṭayaṃ/*
    antānantādi cāpy atra kutaḥ śānte catuṣṭayaṃ//

Where within fourfold permanence, impermanence, etc., is peace?
Where within fourfold finitude, infinity, etc., is happiness?

13. *yena grāho [ghanagrāho] gṛhītas tu ghano [yenā]*
    'stīti tathāgataḥ/
    nāstīti sa vikalpayan nirvṛtasyāpi kalpayet//

You are grasped and destroyed by grasping false imaginings that the Tathāgata "exists"
or "does not exist." He would be imagined to the same as one who is deceased.

14. *svabhāvataś ca śūnye 'smiṃś cintā naivopapadyate/*
    paraṃ nirodhād bhavati buddho na bhavatīti vā//

In what is open by nature, this thought:
"The Buddha exists or does not exist after death" does not occur.

15. *prapañcayanti ye buddhaṃ prapañcātītam avyayaṃ/*
    te prapañcahatāḥ sarve na paśyanti tathāgataṃ//

Those who imagine the Buddha, who is beyond being described by false statements,
are all destroyed by idle fancy. They do not see the Tathāgata.

16. *tathāgato yat svabhāvas tat svabhāvam idaṃ jagat/*
    tathāgato niḥsvabhāvo niḥsvabhāvam idaṃ jagat//

What self-nature is the Tathāgata, that self-nature is the world.
The Tathāgata is without self-nature and the world is without that self-nature.

XXIII
viparyāsaparīkṣā
Analysis of Error

1. *saṃkalpaprabhavo rāgo dveṣo mohaś ca kathyate/*
   śubhāśubhaviparyāsān saṃbhavanti pratītya hi//

Desire, hatred, and delusion are said to rise from false discrimination.
They develop depending on errors of purity and impurity.

2. *śubhāśubhaviparyāsān saṃbhavanti pratītya ye/*
   te svabhāvān na vidyante tasmāt kleśā na tattvataḥ//

Whichever develop depending on errors of purity and impurity, they do not occur as self-natures. Therefore, in truth, the defilements do not exist.

3. *ātmano 'stitvanāstitve na kathaṃ cic ca sidhyataḥ/*
   taṃ vināstitvanāstitve kleśānāṃ sidhyataḥ kathaṃ//

Where the existence or nonexistence of the self is not in any way even established,
without it in existence or not in existence, how are the defilements established?

4. *kasya cid dhi bhavantīme kleśāḥ sa ca na sidhyati/*
   kaścid āho vinā kiṃ cit [kamcit] santi kleśā na kasya cit//

Indeed, whose are these defilements since he is not established?
Who says, without anyone, defilements exist that belong to no one?

5. *svakāyadṛṣṭivat kleśāḥ kliṣṭe santi na pañcadhā/*
   svakāyadṛṣṭivat kliṣṭaṃ kleśeṣv api na pañcadhā//

Having demonstrated that one's own nature is not fivefold, where are the defilements in the afflicted one?
Having demonstrated that one's own nature is not fivefold, where is the afflicted one in the defilements?

6. *svabhāvato na vidyante śubhāśubhaviparyayāḥ/*
pratītya katamān kleśāḥ śubhāśubhaviparyayān//

Errors of purity and impurity do not occur naturally.
How are defilements dependent on errors of purity and impurity?

7. *rūpaśabdarasasparśā gandhā dharmāś ca ṣaḍvidhaṃ/*
vastu rāgasya dveṣasya [doṣasya] mohasya ca vikalpyate//

Physical form, sound, taste, touch, smell, and events are imagined as six substantially existing things having desire, hatred, and delusion.

8. *rūpaśabdarasasparśā gandhā dharmāś ca kevalāḥ/*
gandharvanagarākārā marīcisvapnasaṃnibhāḥ//

Physical form, sound, taste, touch, smell, and events are
made-up imaginary cities in the sky, like dreams and mirages.

9. *aśubhaṃ vā śubhaṃ vāpi kutas teṣu bhaviṣyati/*
māyāpuruṣakalpeṣu pratibimbasameṣu ca//

Where will purity or impurity be in these
people equal to illusions and like shadows?

10. *anapekṣya śubhaṃ nāsty aśubhaṃ prajñapayemahi/*
yat pratītya śubhaṃ tasmāc chubhaṃ naivopapadyate//

Indeed, we teach that purity is to depend on impurity not existing
and purity depends on that. Therefore, purity does not happen.

11. *anapekṣyāśubhaṃ nāsti śubham prajñapayemahi/*
yat pratītyaśubham tasmādaśubhaṃ naiva vidyate//

Indeed, we teach that impurity is to depend on purity not existing
and impurity depends on that. Therefore, impurity does not occur.

12. *avidyamāne ca śubhe kuto rāgo bhaviṣyati/*
    aśubhe 'avidyamāne ca kuto dveṣo bhaviṣyati//

Where purity is present, from where will passion arise?
Where impurity is not present, from where will hatred arise?

13. *anitye nityam ity evaṃ yadi grāho viparyayaḥ/*
    nānityaṃ vidyate śūnye kuto grāho viparyayaḥ//

If the error "there is permanence in impermanence" is so seized,
impermanence does not occur. Where is error seized in what is open?

14. *anitye nityam ity evam yadi grāho viparyayaḥ/*
    anityam ity api grāhaḥ śūnye kiṃ na viparyayaḥ//

If the error "there is permanence in impermanence" is so seized,
"impermanence" is also grasped. What is without error in what is open?

15. *yena gṛhṇāti yo grāho grahītā yac ca gṛhyate/*
    upaśāntāni sarvāṇi tasmād grāho na vidyate//

What is grasped by the grasper and whoever is grasped by means of grasping
are all calmed. Therefore grasping does not occur.

16. *vidyamāne grāhe ca mithyā vā samyag eva vā/*
    bhaved viparyayaḥ kasya bhavet kasyāviparyayaḥ//

And where grasping is present, either rightly or wrongly,
whose error would it be, whose nonerror would it be?

17. *na cāpi viparītasya saṃbhavanti viparyayāḥ/*
    na cāpy aviparītasya saṃbhavanti viparyayāḥ//

The errors of an erring one do not develop.
The errors of a nonerring one also do not develop.

18. *na viparyasyamānasya saṃbhavanti viparyayāḥ/*
vimṛśasva svayam kasya saṃbhavanti viparyayāḥ//

The errors of what is presently erring do not develop.
Consider for yourself whose errors come about.

19. *anutpannāḥ kathaṃ nāma bhaviṣyanti viparyayāḥ/*
viparyayeṣv ajāteṣu viparyayagataḥ kutaḥ//

How will whatever is nonarising be called errors?
Where error is unborn, where has error gone?

20. *na svato jāyate bhāvaḥ parato naiva jāyate/*
na svataḥ parataś ceti viparyayagataḥ kutaḥ//

A being is "not born from itself, not born from another,
nor from both itself and another." Where has error gone?

21. *ātmā ca śuci nityaṃ ca sukhaṃ ca yadi vidyate/*
ātmā ca śuci nityaṃ ca sukhaṃ ca na viparyayāḥ//

If the self, purity, permanence, and happiness occur,
the self, purity, permanence, and happiness are not errors.

22. *nātmā ca śuci nityaṃ ca sukhaṃ ca yadi vidyate/*
anātmā 'śucy anityaṃ ca naiva duḥkhaṃ ca vidyate//

If the self, purity, permanence, and happiness do not occur,
neither the nonself, impurity, impermanence, or suffering occur.

23. *evaṃ nirudhyate 'vidyā viparyayanirodhanāt/*
avidyāyāṃ niruddhāyāṃ saṃskārādyaṃ nirudhyate//

Thus from the cessation of errors, ignorance is stopped.
Where ignorance has ceased, disposition, etc., is stopped.

24. *yadi bhūtāḥ svabhāvena kleśāḥ ke cid dhi kasya cit/*
kathaṃ nāma prahīyeran kaḥ svabhāvaṃ prahāsyati//

If any beings are defiled by their own nature, whose [defilements] are they?
How would they be called abandoned? Who will abandon self-nature?

25. *yady abhūtāḥ svabhāvena kleśāḥ ke cid dhi kasya cit/*
kathaṃ nāma prahīyeran ko 'sadbhāvaṃ prahāsyati//

If not any beings are defiled by their own nature, whose [defilements] are they?
How would they be called abandoned? Who will abandon what does not really exist?

XXIV
āryasatyaparīkṣā
Analysis of Noble Truth

1. *yadi śūnyam idaṃ sarvam udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ/*
catūrṇām āryasatyānām abhāvas te prasajyate//

If all this is open, there is neither arising nor dissolution.
The nonexistence of the four noble truths follows for you.

2. *parijña ca prahāṇaṃ ca bhāvanā sākṣikarma ca/*
catūrṇām āryasatyānām abhāvān nopapadyate//

Knowledge, abandonment, practice, and realization do not
take place by the nonexistence of the four noble truths.

3. *tadabhāvān na vidyante catvāry āryaphalāni ca/*
phalābhāve phalasthā no na santi pratipannakāḥ//

With that nonexistence, the four noble fruits do not occur.
Where the fruit is nonexistent, the stage in which the fruits are enjoyed and those who have arrived at the goal do not exist.

4. *saṅgho nāsti na cet santi te 'stau puruṣapudgalāḥ/*
abhāvāc cāryasatyānāṃ saddharmo 'pi na vidyate//

If the above eight kinds of persons or human beings do not exist, the Buddhist community does not exist.
From the nonexistence of the Noble Truths, the true Teaching does not occur.

5. *dharme cāsati saṅghe ca kathaṃ buddho bhaviṣyati/*
evaṃ trīṇy api ratnāni bruvāṇṇaḥ pratibādhase//

Where the Teaching and the Buddhist community do not exist, how will the Buddha exist?
Thus speaking, the three jewels are denied by you.

6. *śūnyatāṃ phalasadbhāvam adharmaṃ dharmam eva ca/*
sarvasaṃvyavahārāṃś ca laukikān pratibādhase//

Openness, good or bad results, the Teaching, and
all worldly everyday activities are denied by you.

7. *atra brūmaḥ śūnyatāyāṃ na tvaṃ vetsi prayojanam/*
śūnyatāṃ śūnyatārthaṃ ca tata evaṃ vihanyase//

We reply that here you have not experienced the purpose in openness,
and thus the use of openness is severed from openness by you.

8. *dve satye samupāśritya buddhānāṃ dharmadeśanā/*
lokasaṃvṛtisatyaṃ ca satyaṃ ca paramārthataḥ//

The instruction of the teachings of the *buddhas* are based on two truths:
the truth of common sense conventions about the world and truth in the higher sense of the word.

9. *ye 'nayor na vijānanti vibhāgaṃ satyayor dvayoḥ/*
te tattvaṃ na vijānanti gambhīraṃ buddhaśāsane//

Those who do not understand the distinction between the two truths
do not understand the profound reality in the teaching of the Buddha.

10. *vyavahāram anāśritya paramārtho na deśyate/*
paramārtham anāgamya nirvāṇaṃ nādhigamyate//

Higher truth is not taught independently of common practice.
Liberation is not accomplished by the unattainable higher truth.

11. *vināśayati durdṛṣṭā śūnyatā mandamedhasaṃ/*
sarpo yathā durgṛhīto vidyā vā duṣprasādhitā//

Openness wrongly conceived destroys the dimly witted.
It is like a snake grasped by the head or a garbled incantation.

12. *ataś ca pratyudāvṛttaṃ cittaṃ deṣayituṃ muneḥ/*
dharmaṃ matvāsya dharmasya mandair [deśayitum]
duravagāhatām//

And hence the Sage's thought was turned against causing the Truth to be taught.
The purpose of the Teaching is difficult to fathom for the lazy.

13. *śūnyatāyām adhilayaṃ yaṃ punaḥ kurute bhavān/*
doṣaprasaṅgo nāsmākaṃ sa śūnye nopapadyate//

But what objection to openness is made by the twelvefold causal chain of becoming?
The condemnation is not ours. It does not apply in what is open.

14. *sarvaṃ ca yujyate tasya śūnyatā yasya yujyate/*
sarvaṃ na yujyate tasya śūnyaṃ yasya na yujyate//

Because openness works, therefore everything works.
If openness does not work, then everything does not work.

15. *sa tvaṃ doṣān ātmanīyān asmāsu paripātayan/*
aśvam evābhirūḍhaḥ sann aśvam evāsi vismṛtaḥ//

You have projected your errors on us.
You are like one who mounts a horse forgetting the saddle.

16. *svabhāvād yadi bhāvānāṃ sadbhāvam anupaśyasi/*
ahetupratyayān bhāvāṃs tvam evaṃ sati paśyasi//

If you consider that the existence of beings is from self-nature,
you see beings existing without cause or conditions.

17. *kāryaṃ ca kāraṇaṃ caiva kartāraṃ karaṇaṃ kriyāṃ/*
utpādaṃ ca nirodhaṃ ca phalaṃ ca pratibādhase//

You deny effect, cause, agent, action, and activity
as well as arising, cessation, and the fruit [of action].

18. *yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatāṃ tāṃ pracakṣmahe/*
sā prajñaptir upādāya pratipat saiva madhyamā//

What is interdependent origination, that is called openness by us.
It [openness] makes use of convention and is the practice of the middle way.

19. *apratītya samutpanno dharmaḥ kaścin na vidyate/*
yasmāt tasmād aśūnyo 'hi dharmaḥ kaścin na vidyate//

Not any event not interdependently originated occurs.
Indeed, not any event that is not open occurs.

20. *yad yaśūnyam idaṃ sarvam udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ/*
catūrṇām āryasatyānām abhāvaste prasajyate//

If all this is not open, arising and dissolution do not exist.
For you, the nonexistence of the four noble truths follows.

21. *apratītya samutpannaṃ kuto duḥkhaṃ bhaviṣyati/*
anityam uktaṃ duḥkhaṃ hi tat svābhāvye na vidyate//

How will there be suffering that is not interdependently originated?
Suffering is said to be impermanent. Indeed, it does not occur in what is imagined to have self-nature.

22. *svabhāvato vidyamānaṃ kiṃ punaḥ samudeṣyate/*
tasmāt samudayo nāsti śūnyatāṃ pratibādhataḥ//

Again, why will what is presently existing as a consequence of self-nature rise again?
Therefore, from the denial of openness, there is the nonexistence of arising.

23. *na nirodhaḥ svabhāvena sato duḥkhasya vidyate/*
svabhāvaparyavasthānān nirodhaṃ pratibādhase//

The cessation of suffering existing by means of self-nature does not occur.
Cessation by contradictions in self-nature is denied by you.

24. *svābhāvye sati mārgasya bhāvanā nopapadyate/*
athāsau bhāvyate mārgaḥ svābhāvyaṃ te na vidyate//

In what is conceived to be existing by self-nature, practice of the path does not take place.
But were this path caused to exist by you, what is imagined to be self-nature does not occur.

25. *yadā duḥkhaṃ samudayo nirodhaś ca na vidyate/*
mārgo duḥkhanirodhatvāt katamaḥ prāpayiṣyati//

If suffering, arising, and cessation does not occur,
which path will result in the cessation of suffering?

26. *svabhāvenāparijñānaṃ yadi tasya punaḥ kathaṃ/*
parijñānaṃ nanu kila svabhāvaḥ samavasthitaḥ//

There is no thesis by means of self-nature. How is there a thesis
or proposition about it if self-nature is never assuredly established?

27. *prahāṇasāksātkaraṇe bhāvanā caivameva te/*
parijñāvan na yujyante catvāry api phalāni ca//

Practice in the intuitive perception of letting go and thus
possession of a thesis and also the four noble fruits do not occur for you.

28. *svabhāvenānadhigataṃ yat phalaṃ tat punaḥ kathaṃ/*
śakyaṃ samadhigantuṃ syāt svabhāvaṃ parigṛhṇataḥ//

Again, how is which fruit attained by means of self-nature?
Self-nature would be able to encompass and completely grasp it.

29. *phalābhāve phalasthā no na santi pratipannakāḥ/*
saṅgho nāsti na cet santi te 'ṣṭau puruṣapudgalāḥ//

Where the fruits do not exist, the stage in which the fruits are enjoyed and those who have arrived at a goal do not exist.
If the eight kinds of persons or human beings do not exist, the Buddhist community does not exist.

30. *abhāvāc cāryasatyānāṃ saddharmo 'pi na vidyate/*
dharme cāsati saṃghe ca kathaṃ buddho bhaviṣyati//

From the nonexistence of the noble truths, the true Teaching does not occur.
Where the Teaching and the Buddhist community do not exist, how will the Buddha exist?

31. *apratītyāpi bodhiṃ ca tava buddhaḥ prasajyate/*
apratītyāpi buddhaṃ ca tava bodhiḥ prasajyate//

It follows for you that the Buddha is independent of enlightenment.
And it follows for you that enlightenment is independent of the Buddha.

32. *yaś cābuddhaḥ svabhāvena sa bodhāya ghaṭann api/*
na bodhisattvacaryāyāṃ bodhiṃ te 'dhigamiṣyati//

Whoever is not a *buddha* by means of self-nature, he is striving after enlightenment.

For you, he will not attain enlightenment in the practices of *bodhisattvas*.

33. *na ca dharmam adharmaṃ vā kaścij jātu kariṣyati/*
kim aśūnyasya kartavyaṃ svabhāvaḥ kriyate na hi//

Not anyone at all will do good or bad deeds.
Indeed, self-nature is not made by what is to be made of what is not open.

34. *vinā dharmam adharmaṃ ca phalaṃ hi tava vidyate/*
dharmādharmanimittaṃ ca phalaṃ tava na vidyate//

Indeed, for you the fruit occurs without good and bad deeds.
But for you the fruit does not occur without being caused by good or bad deeds.

35. *dharmādharmanimittaṃ vā yadi te vidyate phalaṃ/*
dharmādharmasamutpannam aśūnyaṃ te kathaṃ phalaṃ//

If the fruit occurs for you without being caused by good or bad deeds, how is the fruit produced by good or bad deeds not open?

36. *sarvasaṃvyavahārāṃś ca laukikān pratibādhase/*
yat pratītyasamutpādaśūnyatāṃ pratibādhase//

All worldly everyday activites are denied by you.
That openness is what is interdependently originated is denied by you.

37. *na kartavyaṃ bhavet kiṃcid anārabdhā bhavet kriyā/*
kārakaḥ syād akurvāṇaḥ śūnyatāṃ pratibādhataḥ//

From the denial of openness, there would be nothing to be done, activity would not be a bit commenced, and the doer would not be doing.

38. *ajātam aniruddhaṃ ca kūṭasthaṃ ca bhaviṣyati/*
vicitrābhir avasthābhiḥ svabhāve rahitaṃ jagat//

In the self-nature doctrine, the world, void of a state of diversity,
will be unborn, unceasing, and unchanging.

39. *asaṃprāptasya ca prāptir duḥkhaparyantakarma ca/*
sarvakleśaprahāṇaṃ ca yady aśūnyaṃ na vidyate//

If what is not open does not occur, there is abandonment of all
defilements and action that is the end of suffering and attainment of the unattained.

40. *yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaṃ paśyatīdaṃ sa paśyati/*
duḥkhaṃ samudayaṃ caiva nirodhaṃ mārgam eva ca//

He who sees interdependent origination sees this;
suffering, arising and ceasing, and also the path.

XXV
nirvāṇaparīkṣā
Analysis of *Nirvāṇa*

1. *yadi śūnyam idaṃ sarvam udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ/*
prahāṇād vā nirodhād vā kasya nirvāṇam iṣyate//

If all this is open, there is neither arising nor passing away.
Whose liberation is presupposed either through abandonment or through cessation?

2. *yady aśūnyam idaṃ sarvam udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ/*
prahāṇād vā nirodhād vā kasya nirvāṇam iṣyate//

If all this is not open, there is neither arising nor passing away.
Whose freedom is presupposed either through abandonment or cessation?

3. *aprahīṇam asaṃprāptam anucchinnam aśāśvatam/*
aniruddham anutpannam etan nirvāṇam ucyate//

What is not abandoned and not attained, not interrupted and not permanent,

not destroyed and not produced, this is called *nirvāṇa*.

4. *bhāvas tāvan na nirvāṇaṃ jarāmaraṇalakṣaṇaṃ/*
prasajyetāsti bhāvo hi na jarāmaraṇaṃ vinā//

Firstly, *nirvāṇa* is not an existent characterized by old age and death.
Indeed, no being is without old age and death.

5. *bhāvaś ca yadi nirvāṇaṃ nirvāṇaṃ saṃskṛtam bhavet/*
nāsaṃskṛto hi vidyate bhāvaḥ kva cana kaś cana//

If *nirvāṇa* is an existent, *nirvāṇa* would be conditioned.
Not any unconditioned existent occurs anywhere.

6. *bhāvaś ca yadi nirvāṇam anupādāya tat kathaṃ/*
nirvāṇaṃ nānupādāya kaścid bhāvo hi vidyate//

If *nirvāṇa* is existent, how is it nongrasping?
For not any nongrasping *nirvāṇa* occurs as existent.

7. *adi bhāvo [bhāvo yadi] na nirvāṇam abhāvaḥ kiṃ bhaviṣyati/*
nirvāṇaṃ yatra bhāvo na nābhāvas tatra vidyate//

If *nirvāṇa* is not existent, will *nirvāṇa* be nonexistent?
Where there is no existent, there is no nonexistent.

8. *yady abhāvaś ca nirvāṇam anupādāya tat kathaṃ/*
nirvāṇaṃ na hy abhāvo 'sti yo 'nupādāya vidyate//

If *nirvāṇa* is nonexistent, how is *nirvāṇa* not grasping it [existence]?
Indeed, no nongrasping nonexistent occurs.

9. *ya ājavaṃjavībhāva upādāya pratītya vā/*
sa 'pratītyānupādāya nirvāṇam upadiśyate//

That state of moving restlessly to and fro [*saṃsāra*] is grasping and dependent.
But *nirvāṇa* is taught as without grasping and without dependence.

10. *prahāṇaṃ cābravīc chāstā bhavasya vibhavasya ca/*
tasmān na bhāvo nābhāvo nirvāṇam iti yujyate//

The Teacher [Buddha] taught the abandonment of becoming and nonbecoming.
Therefore, the assertion "*nirvāṇa* is neither existent nor nonexistent" is reasonable.

11. *bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇam ubhayaṃ yadi/*
bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca mokṣas tac ca na yujyate//

If *nirvāṇa* would be both existent and nonexistent,
liberation would be both existent and nonexistent. But that is not reasonable.

12. *bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇam ubhayaṃ yadi/*
nānupādāya nirvāṇam upādāyobhayaṃ hi tat//

If *nirvāṇa* would be both existent and nonexistent,
nirvāṇa would not be nongrasping for both are grasping.

13. *bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇam ubhayaṃ katham/*
asaṃskṛtaṃ ca nirvāṇaṃ bhāvābhāvau ca saṃskṛtau//

How could *nirvāṇa* be both existent and nonexistent?
Nirvāṇâ is unconditioned, and both existent and nonexistent are conditioned.

14. *bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇam ubhayaṃ katham/*
na tayor ekatrāstitvam ālokatamasor yathā//
[tayor abhāvo hy ekatra prakāśatamasor iva//]

How could *nirvāṇa* be both existent and nonexistent?
There is no existence of both, as with light and darkness, in the same place.

15. *naivābhāvo naiva bhāvo nirvāṇam iti yā 'ñjanā/*
abhāve caiva bhāve ca sā siddhe sati sidhyati//

What is clear is the statement "*nirvāṇa* is not existent and not nonexistent."
It is demonstrated where being and nonbeing are established as existing.

16. *naivābhāvo naiva bhāvo nirvāṇaṃ yadi vidyate/*
naivābhāvo naiva bhāva iti kena tad ajyate//

If *nirvāṇa* is known by neither existent nor nonexistent,
it can be made clear by whom as "neither existent nor nonexistent"?

17. *paraṃ nirodhād bhagavān bhavatīty eva nohyate/*
na bhavaty ubhayaṃ ceti nobhayaṃ ceti nohyate//

It is not maintained that "the Venerable One exists after death"
nor is it maintained "he does not exist" or "both or neither."

18. *tiṣṭhamāno 'pi bhagavān bhavatīty eva nohyate/*
na bhavaty ubhayaṃ ceti nobhayaṃ ceti nohyate//

It is not maintained that "the Venerable One exists while remaining in the world" nor is it maintained that "he does not exist or both or neither."

19. *na saṃsārasya nirvāṇāt kiṃcid asti viśeṣaṇaṃ/*
na nirvāṇasya saṃsārāt kiṃcid asti viśeṣaṇaṃ//

There is no distinction whatever between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.
There is no distinction whatever between *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra*.

20. *nirvāṇasya ca yā koṭiḥ [koṭiḥ] saṃsaraṇasya ca/*
na tayor antaraṃ kiṃcit susūkṣmam api vidyate//

The limit of *nirvāṇa* is that of *saṃsāra*.
The subtlest difference is not found between the two.

21. *paraṃ nirodhād antādyāḥ śāśvatādyāś ca dṛṣṭayaḥ/*
nirvāṇam aparāntaṃ ca pūrvāntaṃ ca samāśritāḥ//

Views, such as permanence, etc., finitude, etc., after death,
are associated with a past and future *nirvāṇa.*

22. *śūnyeṣu sarvadharmeṣu kim anantaṃ kimantavat/*
    kim anantam antavac ca nānantaṃ nānatavacca kiṃ//

Since all events are open, what is infinite? What is finite?
What is infinite and finite and what is neither infinite nor finite?

23. *kiṃ tad eva kim anyat kiṃ śāśvataṃ kim aśāśvataṃ/*
    aśāśvataṃ śāśvataṃ ca kiṃ vā nobhayam apy ataḥ [atha]//

What has gone away? What identity? What difference?
What is permanent and impermanent or neither and so forth?

24. *sarvopalambhopaśamaḥ prapañcopaśamaḥ śivaḥ/*
    na kva cit kasyacit kaścid dharmo buddhena deśitaḥ//

Liberation is the cessation of all thought, the quieting of phenomena.
Not any doctrine anywhere has been taught to anyone by the Buddha.

XXVI
dvādaśāṅgaparīkṣā
Analysis of the Twelvefold Chain of Interdependent Origination

1. *punarbhavāya saṃskārān avidyānivṛtas tridhā/*
   abhisaṃskurute yāṃs tair gatiṃ gacchati karmabhiḥ//

Three dispositions leading to rebirth are formed by
unexplained ignorance which moves by means of those actions.

2. *vijñānaṃ saṃniviśate saṃskārapratyayaṃ gatau/*
   samniviṣṭe 'tha vijñāne nāmarūpaṃ niṣicyate//

Consciousness is connected with past disposition and conditioning.
Wherein consciousness deeply enters, name and form [mind/body] is infused.

3. *niṣikte nāmarūpe tu ṣaḍāyatanasaṃbhavaḥ/*
ṣaḍāyatanam āgamya saṃsparśaḥ saṃpravartate//

Where name and form is infused, six sense-spheres arise.
The six senses having arrived, contact comes forth.

4. *cakṣuḥ pratītya rūpaṃ ca samanvāhārameva ca/*
nāmarūpaṃ pratītyaivaṃ vijñānaṃ saṃpravartate//

Form and attention are dependent on the eye.
Name and form is dependent on consciousness coming forth.

5. *saṃnipātas trayāṇāṃ yo rūpavijñānacakṣuṣāṃ/*
sparśaḥ saḥ tasmāt sparśāc ca vedanā saṃpravartate//

The conjunction of the three, which are eye, consciousness, and form,
is contact. And from contact, feeling comes forth.

6. *vedanāpratyayā tṛṣṇā vedanārthaṃ hi tṛṣyate/*
tṛṣyamāṇa upādānam upādatte caturvidhaṃ//

Craving is conditioned by feeling, indeed, craves because of feeling.
He is laid hold of by grasping a fourfold craving.

7. *upādāne sati bhava upādātuḥ pravartate/*
syād dhi yady anupādāno mucyeta na bhaved bhavaḥ//

Where grasping exists, the being who grasps is set in motion.
Indeed, if there would be no grasping, he would be released and there would be no being [who grasps].

8. *pañca skandhāḥ sa ca bhavaḥ bhavāj jātiḥ pravartate/*
jarāmaraṇaduḥkhādi śokāḥ saparidevanāḥ//

He, the being, is five *skandhas* and from being, rebirth is set in motion,
together with lamentations, afflictions, suffering, etc., old age and death.

9. *daurmanasyam upāyāsā jāter etat pravartate/*
kevalasyaivam etasya duḥkhaskandhasya saṃbhavaḥ//

Together with despair, all this is set in motion from birth.
Thus is the origin of this entire mass of suffering.

10. *saṃsāramūlān saṃskārān avidvān saṃskaroty ataḥ/*
avidvān kārakas tasmān na vidvāṃs tattvadarśanāt//

Hence the ignorant compose dispositions, the roots of *saṃsāra.*
Therefore, the ignorant create while the wise, seeing reality, do not.

11. *avidyāyāṃ niruddhāyāṃ saṃskārāṇām asaṃbhavaḥ/*
avidyāyā nirodhas tu jñānenāsyaiva bhāvanāt//

Since the destruction of dispositions is the cessation of ignorance,
cessation of ignorance is from practice based on knowledge.

12. *tasya tasya nirodhena tat tan nābhipravartate/*
duḥkhaskandhaḥ kevalo 'yam evaṃ samyag nirudhyate//

With the cessation of [ignorance], which [link on the causal chain] advances to what [next link]?
Thus this entire mass of suffering is rightly ceased.

XXVII
dṛṣṭiparīkṣa
Analysis of Views

1. *dṛṣṭayo 'bhūvaṃ nābhūvaṃ kiṃ nv atīte 'dhvanīti ca/*
[abhūm atītam adhvānaṃ nābhūvam iti dṛṣṭayaḥ]
yās tāḥ śāśvatalokādyāḥ pūrvāntaṃ samupāśritāḥ//[3]

Wherever views state "I neither existed nor did not exist in the past," they are supported by those about the past, an eternal world, etc.

2. *dṛṣṭayo na bhaviṣyāmi kim anyo 'nāgate 'dhvani/*
bhaviṣyāmīti cāntādyā aparāntaṃ samāśritāḥ//

Wherever views otherwise state "I will exist or I will not exist in the future,"
they are supported by the future, an end, etc.

3. *abhūm atītam adhvānam ity etan nopapadyate/*
yo hi janmasu pūrveṣu sa eva na bhavaty ayam//

The statement "I existed previously" is not said.
Indeed, this one does not exist in previous births.

4. *sa evātmeti tu bhaved upādānaṃ viśiṣyate/*
upādānavinirmukta ātmā te katamaḥ punaḥ//

He is defined as "the self" but would be grasping.
Again, how is your self exempt from grasping?

5. *upādānavinirmukto nāsty ātmeti kṛte sati/*
syād upādānam evātmā nāsti cātmeti vaḥ punaḥ//

When a deed is done, "the self does not exist exempt from grasping."
The self would be grasping and again, for us, that "self" does not exist.

6. *na copādānam evātmā vyeti tat samudeti ca/*
kathaṃ hi nāmopādānam upādātā bhaviṣyati//

As grasping rises and falls, it is not the self.
How will grasping be called the grasper?

7. *anyaḥ punar upādānād ātmā naivopapadyate/*
gṛhyeta hy anupādāno yady anyo na ca gṛhyate//

Again, a self different from grasping does not happen.
Indeed, if he would be grasped by nongrasping, he should not be grasped as different.

8. *evaṃ nānya upādānān [anupādāno] na copādānam eva saḥ/*
ātmā nāsty anupādānaḥ nāpi nāsty eṣa niścayaḥ//

Thus he is neither grasping nor different than grasping.
Nongrasping is not the self nor is he determined in these.

9. *nābhūm atītam adhvānam ity etan nopapadyate/*
   yo hi janmasu pūrveṣu tato 'nyo na bhavat yayaṃ//

The statement "I did not exist previously" is not said,
for this one is not other than whoever was in previous births.

10. *yadi hy ayaṃ bhaved anyaḥ pratyākhyāyāpi taṃ bhavet/*
    tathaiva ca sa saṃtiṣṭhet tatra jāyeta vāmṛtaḥ//

If this one would be different [from previous births], he would be enumerated one by one.
If he would endure, then an immortal would be born.

11. *ucchedaḥ karmaṇāṃ nāśas tathānyena kṛtakarmaṇāṃ/*
    [kṛtam anyena karma ca//]
    anyena paribhogaḥ syād evam ādi prasajyate//[4]

So, the fruit of actions by one would be enjoyed by another.
Thus annihilation and destruction of actions follows.

12. *nāpy abhūtvā samudbhūto doṣo hy atra prasajyate/*
    kṛtako vā bhaved ātmā saṃbhūto vāpy ahetukaḥ//

No one, having not existed previously, is born. Otherwise an error follows here
either the self would be produced spontaneously or the one born is uncaused.

13. *evam dṛṣṭir atīte yā nābhūm aham abhūm ahaṃ/*
    ubhayaṃ nobhayaṃ ceti naiṣā samupapadyate//

Thus the view "I existed in the past, I did not exist,
or both or neither," does not arise.

14. *adhvany anāgate kiṃ nu bhaviṣyāmīti darśanaṃ/*
    na bhaviṣyāmi cety etad atītenādhvanā samaṃ//

The statement "I will exist in the future, I will not exist in the future," is that doctrine not the same as the statement about this in the past?

15. *sa devaḥ sa manuṣyaś ced evaṃ bhavati śāśvataṃ/*
anutpannaś ca devaḥ syāj jāyate na hi śāśvataṃ//

If divine is the same as human, then permanence exists.
A god is not born, would not be born, indeed, he is eternal.

16. *devād anyo manuṣyaś ced aśāśvatam ato bhavet/*
devād anyo manuṣyaś cet saṃtatir nopapadyate//

If a human is different from a god, then interruptedness exists.
If a human is different from a god, then uninterruptedness does not happen.

17. *divyo yady ekadeśaḥ syād ekadeśaś ca mānuṣaḥ/*
aśāśvataṃ śāśvataṃ ca bhavet tac ca na yujyate//

If one part would be human and the other part divine,
there would be eternal and noneternal, and that does not occur.

18. *aśāśvataṃ śāśvataṃ ca prasiddham ubhayaṃ yadi/*
siddhe na śāśvataṃ kāmaṃ naivāśāśvatam ity api//

If both eternal and noneternal are established,
"neither eternal nor noneternal" are intentionally both proved also.

19. *kutaścid āgataḥ kaścit kiṃ cid gacchet punaḥ kva cit/*
yadi tasmād anādis tu saṃsāraḥ syān na cāsti saḥ//

If anyone who has come from somewhere would go anywhere else,
then *saṃsāra* would be beginningless, but that does not exist.

20. *nāsti cec chāśvataḥ kaścit ko bhaviṣyaty aśāśvataḥ/*
śāśvato 'śāśvataś cāpi dvābhyām ābhyāṃ tiraskṛtaḥ//

If nothing eternal exists, what will exist that is noneternal
outside of both or neither eternal and also noneternal?

21. *antavān yadi lokaḥ syāt paralokaḥ katham bhavet/*
athāpy anantavāṃl lokaḥ paralokaḥ kathaṃ bhavet//

If the world has an end, how could there be another world?
But if the world has no end, how could there be another world?

22. *skandhānām eṣa saṃtāno yasmād dīpārciṣāṃ iva/*
pravartate tasmān nāntānantavattvaṃ ca yujyate//
[tasmān nānantavattvaṃ ca nāntavattvaṃ ca yujyate//]

Since the continuity of the personality heaps in these rolls onward like a lamp of flame,
having an end or not having an end [finitude and infinity] thus does not occur.

23. *pūrve yadi ca bhajyerann utpadyeran na cāpy amī/*
skandhāḥ skandhān pratītyemān atha loko 'ntavān bhavet//

If former *skandhas* are to be destroyed, and these depend on those
skandhas which are to be unarisen, then the world would have an end [be finite].

24. *pūrve yadi na bhajyerann utpadyeran na cāpy amī/*
skandhāḥ skandhān pratītyemān loko 'nanto bhaved atha//

If former *skandhas* are not to be destroyed, and these also depend on
those *skandhas* which are to be unarisen, then the world would be infinite.

25. *antavān ekadeśaś ced ekadeśas tv anantavān/*
syād antavān anantaś ca lokas tac ca na yujyate//

But if one part is finite and one part is infinite,
the world would be finite and infinite and that does not occur.

26. *kathaṃ tāvad upādātur ekadeśo vinaṅkṣyate/*
na naṅkṣyate caikadeśa evaṃ caitan na yujyate//

How will one part of a grasper be destroyed and
one part not destroyed? And thus thatis not reasonable.

27. *upādānaikadeśaś ca kathaṃ nāma vinaṅkṣyate/*
na naṅkṣyate caikadeśo naitad apy upapadyate//

How will one part of what is called grasping be destroyed
and one part not be destroyed? That also does not take place.

28. *antavac cāpy anantaṃ ca prasiddham ubhayaṃ yadi/*
siddhe naivāntavat kāmaṃ naivānantavad ity api//

If both finite and infinite are established, then
"neither finite nor infinite" are also intentionally proved.

29. *atha vā sarvabhāvānāṃ śūnyatvāc chāśvatādayaḥ/*
kva kasya katamāḥ kasmāt saṃbhaviṣyanti dṛṣṭayaḥ//

Because of the openness of all beings, why, which,
of what, and where will views about permanence, etc., develop?

30. *sarvadṛṣṭiprahāṇāya yaḥ saddharmam adeśayat/*
anukampām upādāya taṃ namasyāmi gautamaṃ//

I bow to him, Gautama, who, from compassion,
taught the true Teaching for the purpose of abandoning all views.

Notes

1. J. W. de Jong, *Nāgārjuna: Mūlamadhyamakakārikā,* Adyar Madras, The Adyar Library and Research Center, 1977, 5 omits verse 5 because it is a quotation of *Ratnāvalī* IV. 55 and does not occur in any other commentaries on Nāgārjuna's *kārikās*, vi.

2. Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1953, reports that "*anavarāgra*" (without beginning or end) is a term also used of *śūnyatā* in *Mvy* 943, 21.

3. Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās de Nāgārjuna*, has restored the missing first line from Tibetan manuscripts as "*abhūm atītam adhvānaṃ nābhūm iti ca dṛṣṭayaḥ*" but reconstructs it as above on analogy with the second verse, but using "*nv*" [sic], 571. Note how similar de La Vallée Poussin's Tibetan manuscript is to de Jong's Sanskrit text.

4 Kenneth K. Inada, *Nāgārjuna*, 167, and David J. Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way*, reconstruct v. 11 identically, though it is missing from the tome of de La Vallée Poussin.

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RELIGION ◆◆ BUDDHISM

NĀGĀRJUNA AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF OPENNESS

NANCY MCCAGNEY

In this innovative study of the philosopher Nāgārjuna, Nancy McCagney demonstrates that the concept of space ("akasa") in early Indian Mahayana Buddhism is the root metaphor for Nāgārjuna's understanding of "sunyata," or openness. Nāgārjuna's use of the term "sunyata" was new and contrasted with the word's use in Pali Buddhist literature. By using the word to mean "openness," Nāgārjuna was able to elucidate, through a deeper analysis of impermanence, a consistent philosophical foundation for the truth and efficacy of Gautama's Middle Way. McCagney's book will be important for those studying Indian philosophy, Buddhism, and the philosophy of religion.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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